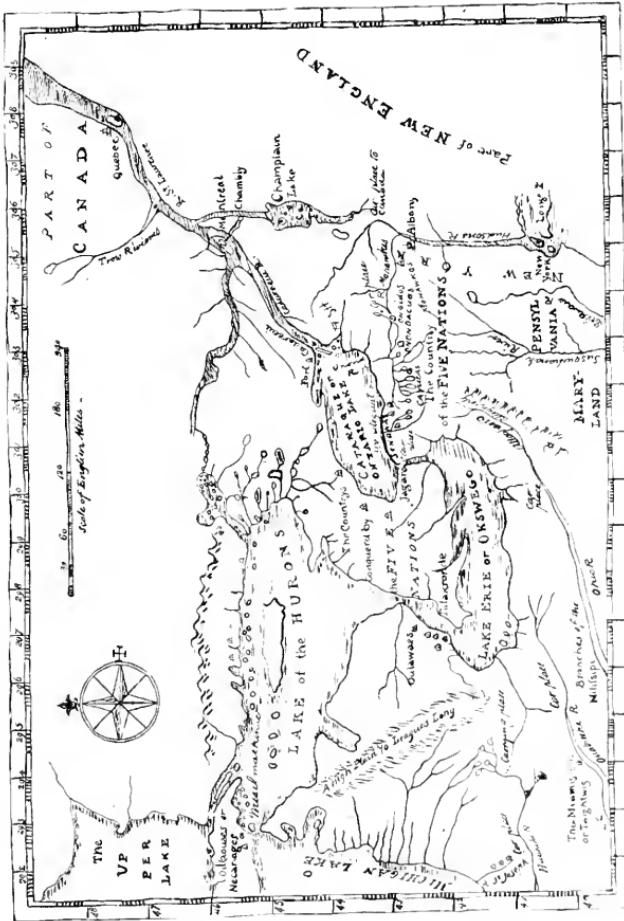


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EARLY MAP OF THE COUNTRY OF THE FIVE NATIONS, 1734.

IROQUOIS

... BY ...

SAMUEL P. MOULTHROP.

Illustrated and
Arranged by ..

SADIE PIERPONT BARNARD.



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PREFACE

Several years ago, the writer recognized the fact that Aborigine history was not only imperfectly known, but masses of information on that subject were inaccessible for reference. Having been for years in full sympathy with the cause of the persecuted students of Indian character, he concluded to secure from the fact that no earliest recollections were of the Menomonee in the northern part of Wisconsin territory, among whom my parents lived at the time of the

birth, led to a careful reading of all works of authority on the subject.

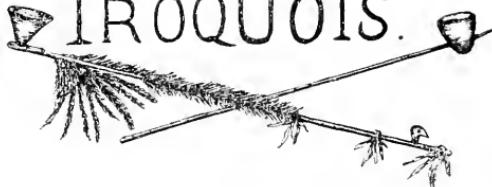
My determination was to provide pupils with a work for supplementary reading that might stimulate them to further research. I am deeply indebted to Lewis H. Morgan, that honored citizen of Rochester, for much that may be found in the following pages. Parkman, Hosmer, Lockwood Doty, Peter A. Porter, Eggleston, Hale's Book of Rites, by D. G. Brinton; the Jesuit Relations, from the New York Historical Collections and papers by Dr. Beauchamp, have been carefully read and studied. They are all benefactors, and should be so recognized by students.

To Miss Sadie Pierpont Barnard the readers are indebted for the illustrations that form one of the most interesting and instructive features of the work. Trusting that its mission may be fulfilled and others led to the field of investigation, I remain

Sincerely yours,
S. P. M.



IROQUOIS.



“I’ve threaded many a devious maze
And Alpine path without a rail,
Yet never felt such tipsy craze
As touched me on the Indian trail.”

ON the Niagara frontier which played so important a part, was so coveted, and exerted so great an influence in peace and war, on the control, growth, settlement and civilization of the country ; almost within hearing of the mighty roar of the “Great Falls Oakinagaro,” and fully within reach of their power is a fitting spot for the erection of this magic Pan-American city, which por-

~~EDUCATION~~

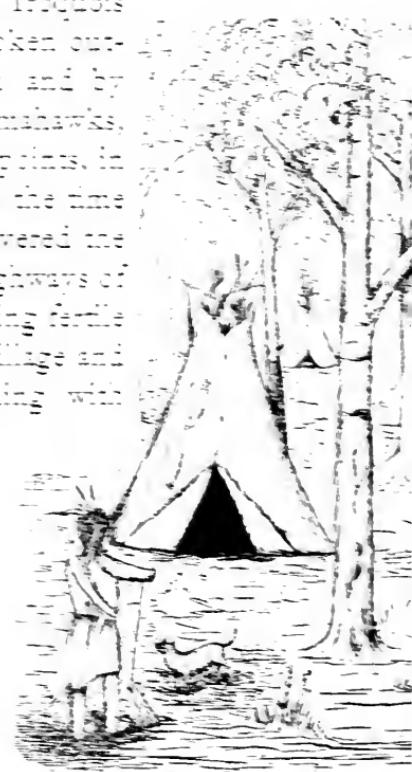
ways in Architecture, Sculpture and Color, the transition of man from the savage state to civilization, and within its gates are found the descendants of the "Irookwa" in Indian tongue, meaning "The Tobacco People."

Fascinated by the charm of story, myth, and legend relating the History, Life and Religion of the Indians of New York state it is intensely interesting to search along the Indian Trails now so nearly obliterated by the relentless march of civilization, for some trace or record of the savagery that has paled and passed away.

The hatchet has long been buried, and the treachery and cruelty of the savage that terrorized the early settlers is well nigh forgotten, and as zealously

as they sought to avoid crossing the path of the redman, we now seek to discover their old battle grounds, hoarding every tiny bead or arrow found, as a link in the chain that binds together the days of primitive life in the forests and the all absorbing hurry scurry of modern times.

Lured along the trail of the Iroquois by discerning on a hill the broken outline of some old fortification and by finding bits of pottery, tomahawks, flint knives, arrows and spear points, in imagination we are led back to the time of forests primeval, which covered the Empire State, when the highways of water and steel now traversing fertile valley and farm, through village and town, from city to city teeming with



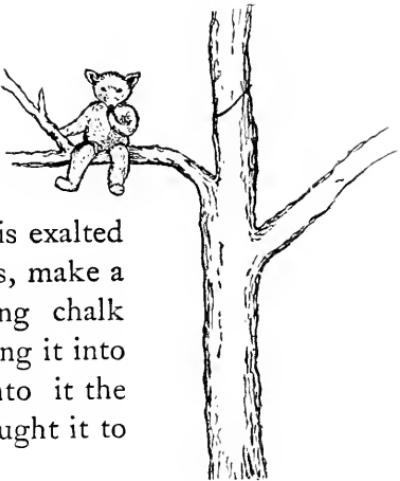


life and industry, were all unknown and unwished.

When the song of the birds, the cry of wild animals, the rush of streams and roar of cataracts, the sound of the wind through the trees, the voice of Henu, the Thunder God, among the hills and the war cry of the red man the true son of the forest, were the only sounds to break the stillness.

A far cry from that time to this, but imagination knows no bounds and will take us even farther back, to the traditional origin of the Redman as given by the Oneida Sachems.

Before man existed there were three great and good spirits, of whom one was superior to the other two and is emphatically called the Great and Good



Spirit. At a certain time this exalted being said to one of the others, make a man. He obeyed, and taking chalk formed a paste of it, moulding it into the human shape, infused into it the animating principle and brought it to the Great Spirit.

He, after surveying it said, "this is too white." He then directed the other good spirit to make a trial of his skill. Accordingly taking charcoal he pursued the same course and brought the result to the Great Spirit, who after surveying it said, "it is too black." Then, said the Great Spirit, "I will now try myself, and taking *red earth*, he formed a human being. In the same manner surveying it, said, "*this is a proper, or perfect man.*"



And these redmen, whose minds were filled with the vast solitudes of nature, whose untamed freedom and utter intolerance of control were in harmony with the cataracts, were stamped with a hard and stern physiognomy.

Ambition, envy, revenge and jealousy were their ruling passions, and their cold temperaments were little exposed to those vices that are the bane of weaker races.

Yet, in spite of their haughty independence they were devoted hero worshipers, and high achievement in war or policy, became a chord to which their nature never failed to respond. They looked up with admiring reverence to the sages and heroes of the tribe. Their love of glory was a burning passion.



The Iroquois were a people noted in history and their institutions are not yet extinct. They had acquired their country by conquest and gloried in the achievement.

The Mo-he-ka-news, considered themselves the original inhabitants of this part of North America and were spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Lacking concentration and harmony they fell an easy prey to the Iroquois, who planted themselves in the midst of this widely extended nation. The Indian population of New York at its highest, was estimated at 7,000 to 18,000. "That they had some ideas in advance of their white brothers who are exterminating birds, beasts and fish, may be inferred from the fact that the



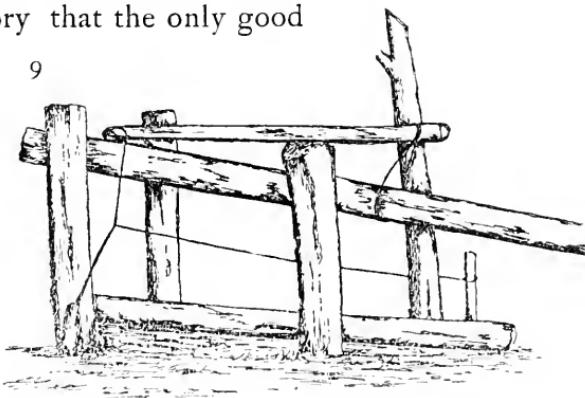


Iroquois once made war on the Illinois, and nearly destroyed them, because they had violated the game laws of the hunting nations in not leaving a certain number of male and female beavers in each pond."

Their moral and mental endowments must have been of a high order to call out such an eulogium as this :

"Nowhere in a long career of discovery, of enterprise and extension of empire, have Europeans found natives of the soil with as many of the noblest attributes of humanity; moral and physical elements which, if they could not have been blended with ours, could have maintained a separate existence and been fostered by the proximity of civilization and the arts. Every-

where, when first approached by our race, they welcomed it and made demonstrations of friendship and peace. Savages as they were called and savage as they may have been in their assaults and wars upon each other, there is no act of theirs recorded in our histories of early colonization, or wrong or outrage that was not provoked by assaults, treachery or deception—breaches of the hospitalities they had extended to the strangers. Whatever of the savage character they may have possessed, so far as our race was concerned, it was dormant until aroused to action by assaults or treachery of intruders upon their soil, whom they had met and treated as friends.” This does not bear out the theory that the only good





Indian, is a dead one. The long house of the Iroquois had for its eastern door the sparkling waters of the Hudson, while the rolling waves of Lake Erie formed its Western entrance. This country, comprising as it did the present state of New York, was favorably located for their stronghold, but their success was due to their inherent energy wrought to the most effective action under a political fabric well suited to the Indian life.

Their highways were trails leading from different points of vantage, but all converging at Onondaga Village, the Onondagas being the fire keepers of the Six Nations which composed the great and strong Iroquoian Confederacy.

This confederacy, called by themselves

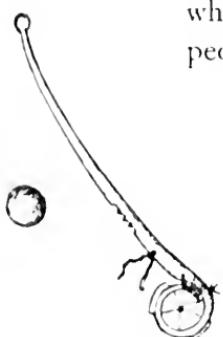
Ho-de-no-sau-nee, consisted originally of five nations, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas, augmented to six by the adoption of the Tuscaroras in 1714 or 15. From the western end of the Territory sallied forth the warlike Senecas, killing and making prisoners from the tribes in what are now known as the Western States, east of the Mississippi. In fact they laid all under their tribute. They roamed like the wolves that infested the forests through the tribes, adopting those whom they chose, thus strengthening their war parties, with every raid by incorporating the flower of the tribes captured.

Possibly they thought "all is fair in love and war," but not in games, of





which the Indian is very fond, for tradition tells us of a mighty war which ended in the expulsion of the Eries from the territory west of the Genesee, about the year 1654, because of a breach of faith or treachery on the part of the Eries in a ball game to which they had challenged the Senecas. "As there is no record, we may never know as to the umpire present on that occasion, whether he was smitten with a war club, cleft with a tomahawk, or merely transfixed with a flight of arrows. The Senecas were fair men, and it must have been some great provocation that led them to wreak such vengeance on the Eries." Upon the whole they were an extraordinary people. Had they enjoyed the advan-



tages possessed by the Greeks and Romans, there is no reason to believe that they would have been at all inferior to those celebrated nations. Their minds seem to have been equal to any efforts within the reach of man. Their conquests, if we consider their numbers and circumstances, were little inferior to Rome itself. In their harmony, the unity of their operations, the energy of their character, the vastness, vigor and success of their enterprises, and the strength and sublimity of their eloquence, they may be fairly contrasted with the Greeks. Each nation was divided into three tribes, The Tortoise, Bear and Wolf, each village a distinct republic, and its concerns were managed by its particular chief.



IROQUOIS

Their exterior relations, general interests, and national affairs were superintended by a great council, assembled annually at Onondaga, the central council composed of the chiefs of each republic, and eighty sachems were frequently convened at their national assembly.

It took cognizance of the great questions of war and peace and of the affairs of the tributary nations.

All their proceedings were conducted with great deliberation and were distinguished for order, decorum and solemnity. They esteemed themselves as sovereigns, accountable to none but God alone, whom they called the Great Spirit. No hereditary distinctions were admitted. The office of Sachem was

the reward of personal merit, great wisdom, commanding eloquence or distinguished services in the field, their most prominent characteristic being an exalted spirit of liberty that spurned foreign or domestic control. In war the use of stratagem was never neglected. While they preferred to take an enemy off his guard, by leading him into an ambuscade, yet when necessary to face him in an open field they fought with a courage and contempt of death that has never been surpassed.

One of the early missionaries describes an Indian who shot at a large bear and wounded him; the bear fell and lay whining and groaning. The Indian went up to him and said: "Bear, you are a coward, and no war-



rior. You know that your tribe and mine are at war, and that your's began it. If you had wounded me I would not have uttered a sound ; and yet you sit here and cry and disgrace your tribe."

It is said that the Iroquois had planned a mighty union, and without doubt had the coming of Europeans been delayed a century later the league would have included all the tribes between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Iroquoian Confederacy remained long after the Eastern and Southern tribes had lost their standing, and to this day keep intact their confederacy and tribal organizations. Their original congress was composed of fifty

Sachems, and generally met at the Onondaga council house.

The business of the congress was conducted in a grave and dignified manner, the reason and judgment of the chiefs being appealed to rather than their passions. It was considered a breach of decorum for a Sachem to reply to a speech on the day of its delivery, and no question could be decided without the concurrence of every member, thus securing unanimity. The Sachems served without badge of office, their sole reward being the veneration of their people in whose interests they were meeting. Public opinion exercised a powerful influence among the Iroquois, the ablest among them having a common dread of the people. Subor-



dinate to these Sachems was an order of chiefs, among whom were Red Jacket, Corn Planter and Big Kettle, who by their oratory and eloquence moved the councils or turned the braves on the warpath. A noticeable trait of the Iroquois was the regard paid to the opinions of women ; the sex were represented in council by chiefs known as squaw men. Thus might the women oppose a war or aid in bringing about a bond of peace. They claimed a special right to interfere in the sale of land, their argument being that the land belonged to the warriors who defended and the squaws by whom it was tilled.



II.

N taking up the government of the Iroquois the position which it occupies seemed to be between the extremes of Monarchy on one hand and Democracy on the other. They had passed out of the first stages or earliest forms of government, that of chief and mentor. It will be readily recognized that a monarchial government is incompatible with hunter life. Several tribes first united into one nation, the people mingled by inter-marriages, and the power of the chiefs ceased to be single and became joint. This brought out an Oligarchial form of government; several nations were united into a confederacy or league. Morgan

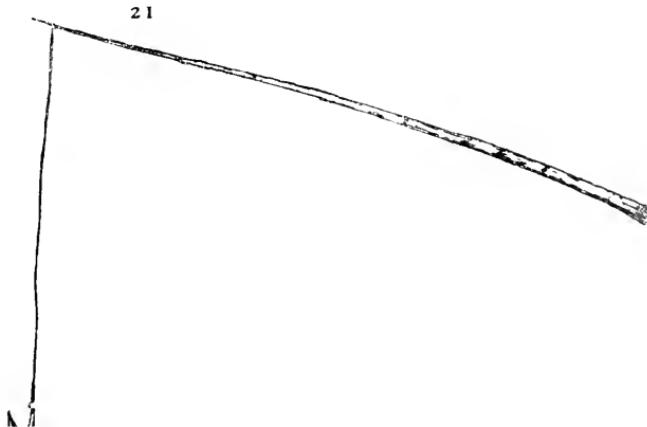


says that in its construction it was more perfect, systematic and liberal than those of antiquity; there was in the Indian fabric more of fixedness, more of dependence upon the people, more of vigor. It would be difficult to find a fairer specimen of the government of the few than the Iroquois, the happy constitution of its ruling body, and in the effective security of the people from misgovernment it stands unrivalled. The spirit prevailing in the confederacy was that of freedom. The people had secured to themselves all the liberty necessary for the united state, and fully appreciated its value; the red man was always free from political bondage. "His free limbs were never shackled."

The Iroquois were entirely convinced

that man was born free, that no person on earth had any right to make any attempt against his liberty, and that nothing could make amends for its loss. The power of the desire for gain, that great passion of civilized man in its use and abuse, his blessing and his curse, never roused the Indian mind ; undoubtedly it was the reason for his remaining in the hunter state. The desire for gain is one of the earliest manifestations of the progressive mind, and one of the most powerful incentives to which the mind is susceptible ; it clears the forest, rears the city, builds the merchantmen, in a word it has civilized the race.

The creation of the class of chiefs furnishes the clearest evidence of the



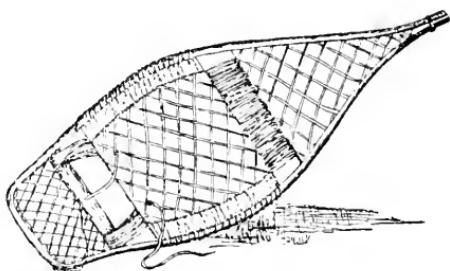


development of the popular element. Under this simple but beautiful fabric of Indian construction arose the power of the Iroquois, reaching at its full meridian, over a large portion of our republic. It is perhaps the only league of nations ever instituted among men, which can point to three centuries of uninterrupted domestic unity and peace. Their political system was necessarily simple. Their limited wants, absence of property in a comparative sense, and the infrequency of crime, dispensed with a vast amount of legislation and machinery incident to the protection of civilized society. From a speculative point of view the institutions of the Iroquois assumed an interesting aspect. Would they naturally have emancipated

the people from their strange infatuation for a hunter life? It cannot be denied that there are some grounds for belief that their institutions would have eventually improved into civilization.

The Iroquois at all times have manifested sufficient intelligence to promise a high degree of improvement if it had once become awakened and directed into right pursuits, though centuries might have been required to effect the change.

But their institutions have a present value irrespective of what they might have become. The Iroquois were our predecessors, this country was once theirs. We should do justice to their memory by preserving their name, deeds, customs and institutions. We





should not tread ignorantly upon those extinguished council fires, whose light in the days of aboriginal occupation was visible over half the continent.

EXPLANATION



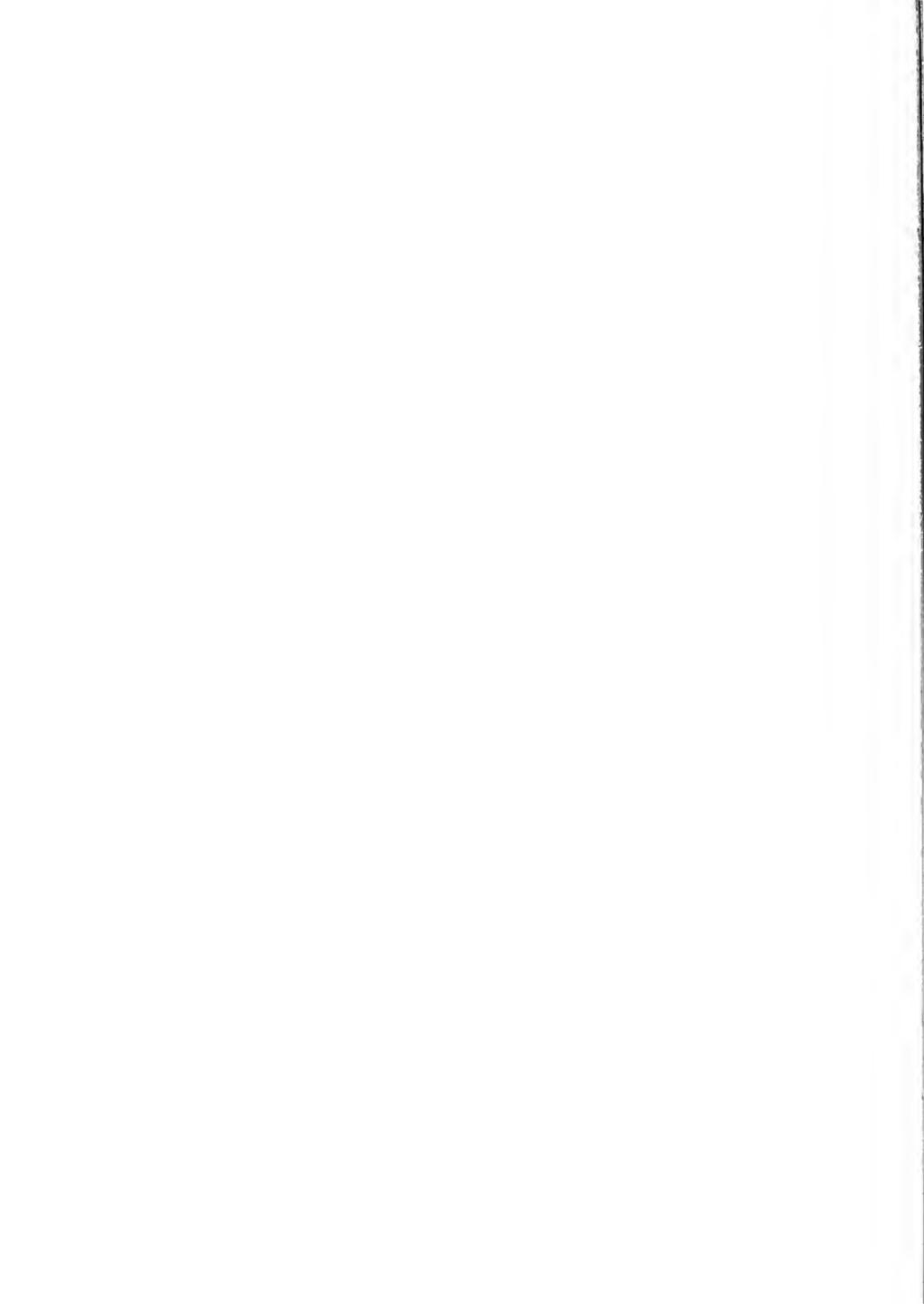
MAP
OF
HO DE NO SAW-NEE GA
OR THE TERRITORIES
OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LONG HOUSE.

IN 1720.

Published by James Fenimore Cooper, at Albany, in the original
Format of the Indian Title. To be sold by General
Printers and Booksellers, in New York and Albany.

— LEWIS H. MORGAN

1851



III.

THE villages of the Mohawks were chiefly in the Mohawk Valley. Around and near Oneida Lake were the principal villages of the Oneidas. The Onondagas were established in the valley of a river of that name and upon the hills adjacent.

On the East shore of Cayuga Lake and upon the ridges to the Eastward were the villages of the Cayugas. In the center of Ontario and Monroe Counties were found the principal villages of the Senecas, the most populous of the Confederacy. In later years during their intercourse and warfare with the whites many of the ancient settlements were abandoned and



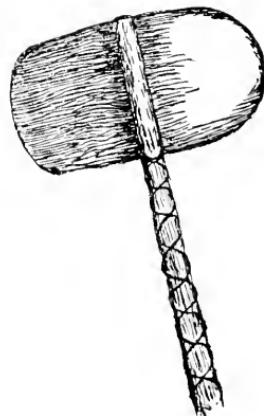
new ones established. In the natural order of things it became necessary for the town sites to be changed occasionally, as game or fish grew scarce, thus in the course of time nearly all of Western New York was covered with village sites.

They boasted of occupying the highest part of the continent, they owned the territory from whence flowed the head waters of the Mohawk, Hudson, Genesee, Delaware, Susquehanna, Ohio and St. Lawrence flowing in every direction to the sea. They held the gates of the country and through them could descend upon any point. Lake Ontario and the mountains on the north and the Alleghanies on the south afforded ample protection from marau-

ders and migratory bands. Lakes and streams in a remarkable manner intersected every part of the Long House; whose head waters were separated only by short portages, and its continuous valleys divided by no mountain barriers offered unequaled facilities for inter-communication.

Indian geographers had little trouble with boundary lines. Their custom of settling or establishing themselves on both sides of a river or taking in the entire circuit of a lake enabled each nation to know the boundaries of its territories. Having no knowledge of wells, their settlements were always made near natural water courses.

The Tuscaroras when expelled from their possessions in North Carolina, in





1712, sought the protection of the Hodenosaunee. They were admitted into the Confederacy as the sixth nation and afterwards regarded as constituent members of the League, although never admitted to a full equality. In 1785 the Tuscaroras were partially scattered among the other nations although they continued to preserve their nationality. They had some settlements at a later day near Oneida Lake, a village west of Cayuga and one in the valley of the Genesee below Avon. Subsequently the Senecas gave them a tract on the Niagara River to which they removed, their descendants still occupying a portion of this land near Lewiston.

There were two other remnants of tribes located within the territory of the

Oneidas. The Mo-he-ke-nuks, a few miles south of Oneida Castle, and Dele-wares a few miles south of Clinton. They asked the Oneidas for a place to spread their blankets, their possessions being subsequently secured to them by treaty. Upon their foreign hunting grounds, which were numerous either nation was at liberty to encamp, but by the establishment of territorial limits the political individuality of each tribe was maintained.

The most interesting feature of aboriginal geography is the location of the trails, and singularly enough if we take either of the great railway lines now extending through our state, we are following one or the other of the leading trails that Lewis H. Morgan has traced



as being used in 1732; the Indians usually following the line of least resistance. The central trail, extending from east to west, intersected by cross trails which passed along lakes or the banks of rivers, is commenced at the point where Albany now is, touched the Mohawk at Schenectady, following the river to the carrying place at Rome, from thence west, crossing Onondaga Valley, the foot of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, and coming out at Buffalo Creek, the present site of Buffalo. This trail was later the route taken, with a few exceptions, by settlers in building a turnpike. This route connected the principal villages, and established a line of travel into Canada on the west, and over the Hudson on the east.

THOMAS LA FORTE.

SHO-HEH-DO-NAH.



ALBERT CUSICK.

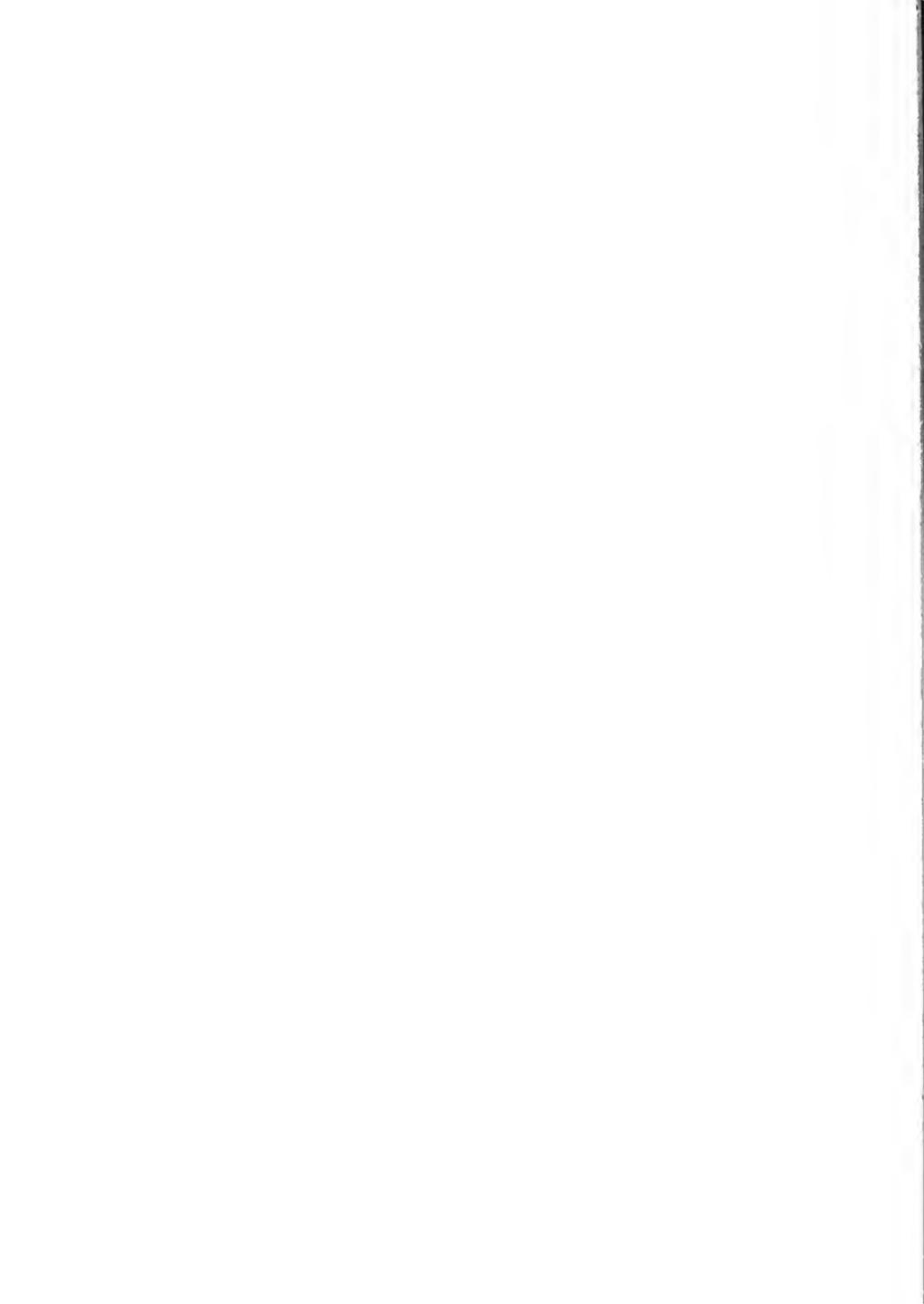
SA-GO-NEH-QUAH-DEH.



ORRIS FARMER.

HO-DE-GWEH.

ON-ON-DA-GA.



Upon the banks of the Susquehanna and its branches, which have their source near the Mohawk, and upon the banks of the Chemung, which has its source near the Genesee, were other trails, all of which converged upon Tioga at the junction of these two principal rivers, thus forming the great Southern route into Pennsylvania and Virginia. For century upon century, and by race after race these old and deeply worn trails have been used by the red man from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. These trails were as accurately laid out and judiciously planned as our own great thoroughfares. On many of these foot paths the Iroquois had conducted war parties and become well versed in the geography of the



IROQUOIS.

country. With their immediate country they were as familiar as we, with our maps, books and teachers as aids. Lakes, hills and streams each had a significant name, and in many instances if the aboriginal names could be given such lakes and rivers, we should in time come to like them better. The nations spoke a different dialect of a common language; although understood by all, the distinction was decisive. This was probably the reason why geographical names vary so much in spelling.

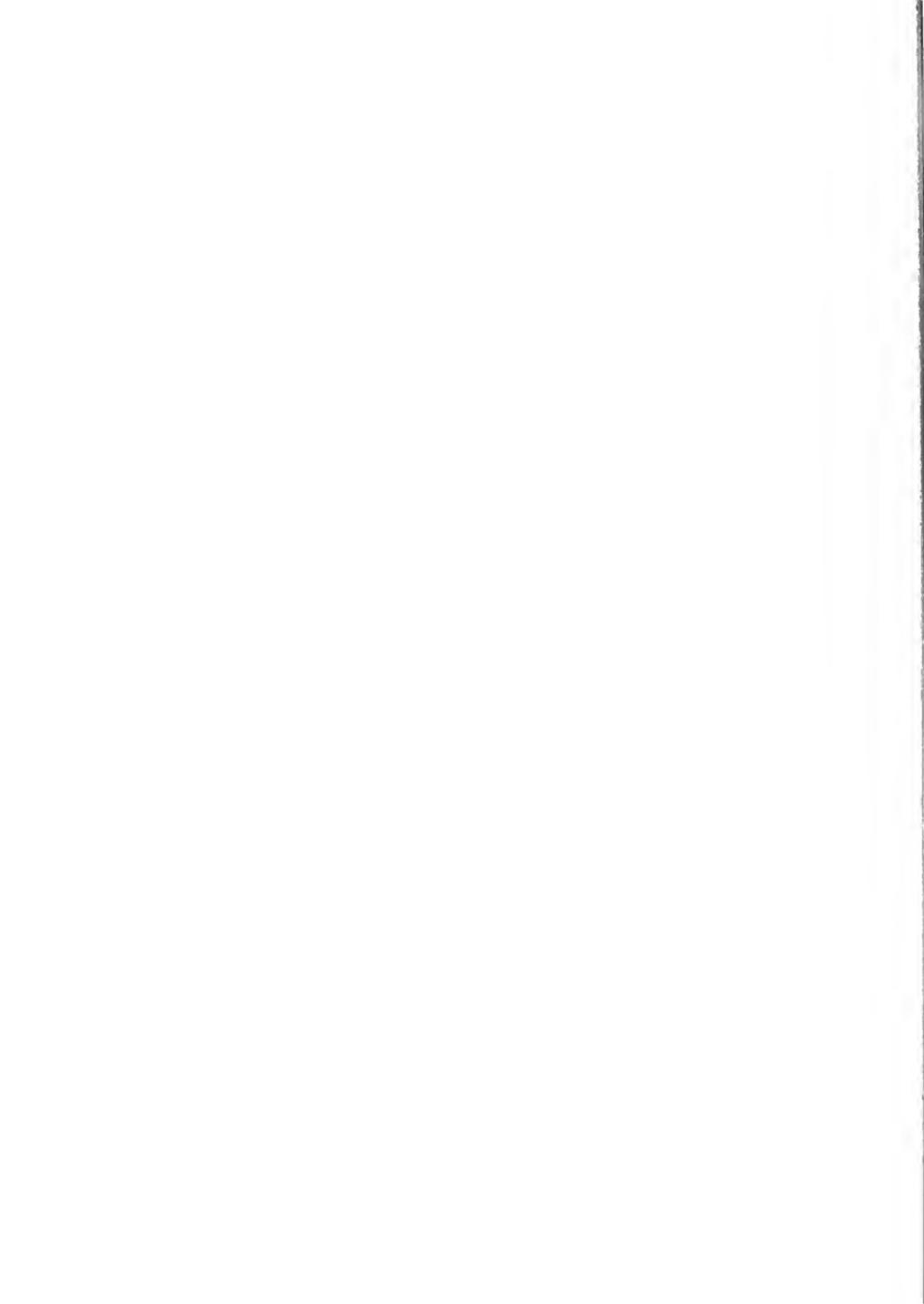
Buffalo in the Seneca	dialect was,	Do-shó-weh
Buffalo in the Cayuga	" "	De-o-shó-weh
Buffalo in the Onondaga	" "	De-o-sá-weh
Buffalo in the Oneida	" "	De-o-se-lols
Buffalo in the Mohawk	" "	Deo-hose-lols
Buffalo in the Tuscarora	" "	Ne-o-thro-rä



CAROLINE G. MOUNTPLEASANT.

GE-KEAH-SAW-SA.

THE PEACEMAKER QUEEN OF THE SENeca'S WOLF CLAN.



In the translation of Indian words from their unwritten language into our written language they lose much of their euphony and force of accent. Many of their sounds are difficult to express in our language with our letters. The names, origin and significance are interesting. From the best authorities we note the following: The Senecas called themselves the Nun-da-wa-o-no, which signifies Great Hill People; Nun-da-wa-o, the root of the word, means a Great Hill, and the terminal syllable o-no means people. This was the name of their oldest village, upon a hill at the head of Canandaigua Lake, near Naples, where according to Seneca tradition they sprang out of the ground. Gue-u-gweh-o-no, the name of the



Cayugas, the people at the mucky land, doubtless referring to the marsh at the foot of Cayuga Lake, near which their first settlements were made. O-nun-da-ga, Onondaga, signifies "on the hills," hence their self-applied name O-nun-da-ga-o-no means the People on the Hills, their first settlements being on the hills overlooking Onondaga Valley. The Oneidas have so long been known as the people of the stone that the literal rendering of their name O-na-yoh-ka, may be interesting ; it signifies "Granite Rock." We give them their natural name Ono-yote-ka-o-no, "The Granite People."

The significance of Ga-ne-a-ga-o-no, the Mohawks, the rendering of their name in their dialect meaning "The

DANIEL LA FORTE.

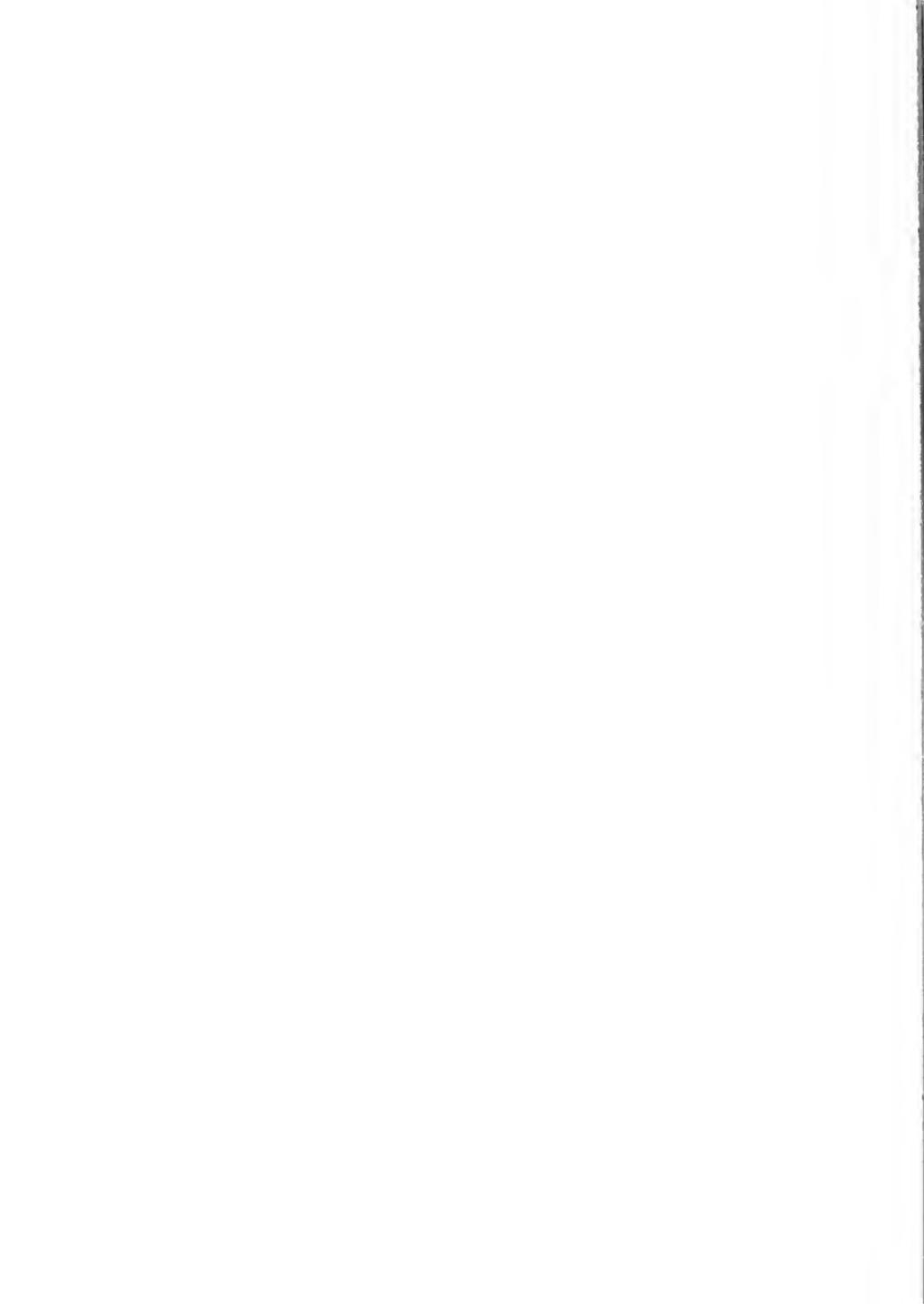


THOMAS WEBSTER.



JARIS PIERCE.

ONONDAGA.



Possessor of the Flint." The name of the Tuscaroras, Deo-ga-o-weh, is rendered the "Shirt Wearing People;" was a name given them before their migration from North Carolina. All the preceding have been given in the Seneca dialect, to preserve uniformity.



IV.

“ Realm of the Senecas no more,
In shadow lies the pleasant vale ;
Gone are the chiefs who ruled of yore
Like chaff before the rushing gale.”

THE Senecas were not only the most numerous of the Six Nations, but foremost on the war-path, and gloried in their title of Ho-na-ne-ho-out, or the door-keepers of the upper entrance, proving a living barrier to all intruders and foes, often carrying war into other nations. The origin of the Senecas, as given by themselves is legendary, although there is an apparent connection with their predecessors, showing that there may be some foundation to the statement by Lockwood, that a thousand years or--as our

SOLOMON O. BAIL.

HO-NOH-NO-OH.



THEODORE JIMERSON.

DE-HAH-TEH.



CHESTER C. LAY.

HO-DO-EH-JI-AH.

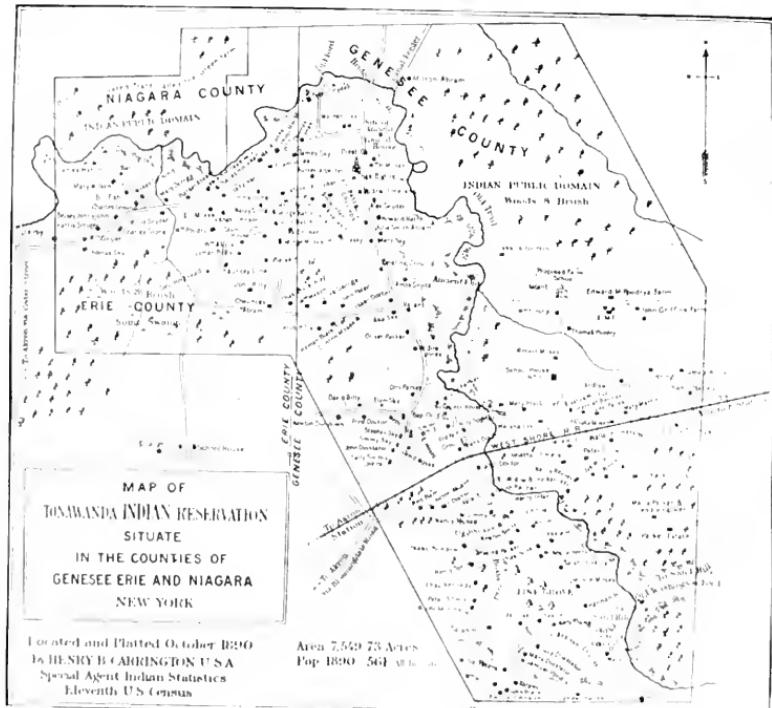
SENECA.

Indian friends would say one thousand snows—before the arrival of Columbus the Senecas were at war with the Kahkwash. These prehistoric people, if we may so characterize them, must have been remarkable for their industry, patience and skill, as alone evinced by their fortifications, some of which may now be seen in a remarkable state of preservation.

A portion of the old fortification at Oakfield, N. Y., still remains. The place was called by the Senecas Tegat-anasghque, meaning a doubly fortified town, having a fort at each end; the one contained about four acres of ground, the other, about two miles distant from this, and situated at the other extremity of the ancient town, enclosed



twice that surface. The ditch around the former was about five or six feet deep. A small stream of living water with a high bank circumscribed nearly one-third of the enclosed ground. There are traces of six gates and a dug-way from the works to the water. The ground on the opposite side of the water is in some places nearly as high as that on which they built the fortification, which might have made it necessary for the covered way to the water. A considerable number of large oaks have grown up within the enclosure, both in and upon the ditch and embankment. Some of them appear to be at least three or four hundred years old. In some places at the bottom of the ditch one could dig down five or



JOHN GRIFFIN.
WER-DYAH-SEHA.



WM. COOPER.
HER-NOHN-GAE-SERS.

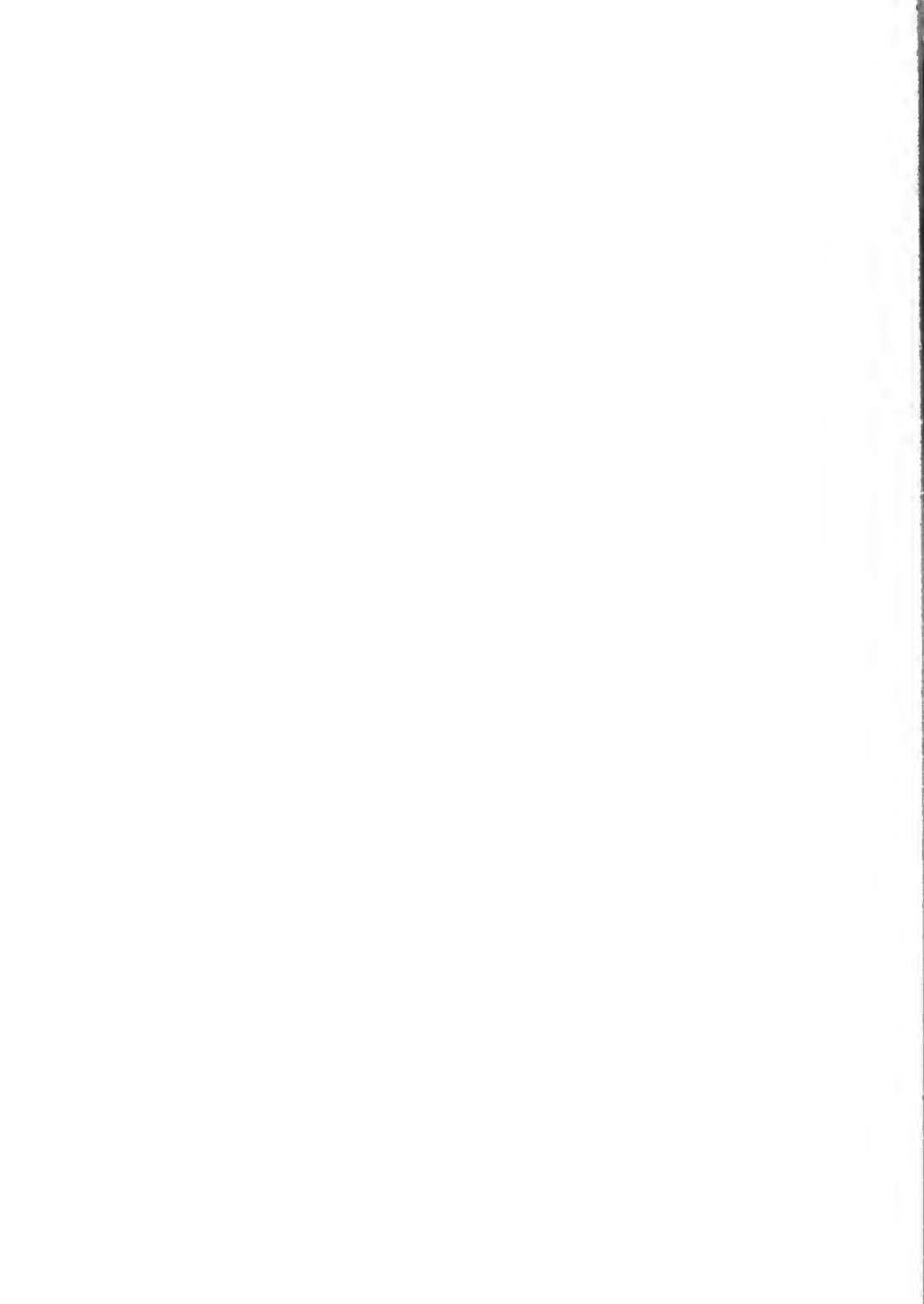


DAVID MOSES.
JO-WEESE.



CHAUNCEY ABRAMS.
NIS-HEA NYAH-NANT.

SENECA.



six feet before reaching the original soil. Indian tradition says that these works were raised, and a famous battle fought, in true Indian style, with Indian weapons, long before their knowledge and use of firearms. The nations used at that time bows, arrows and spears the war club and death mall. When the arrows were expended they came into close engagement, using the death mall. Their shield or dress for this method of fighting was a short jacket made of willow sticks laced tightly around the body. The head was covered with a cap of the same kind, but commonly worn double for the better protection of that part against a stroke from a war club. Some affirm that in this battle 800 were slain four or five



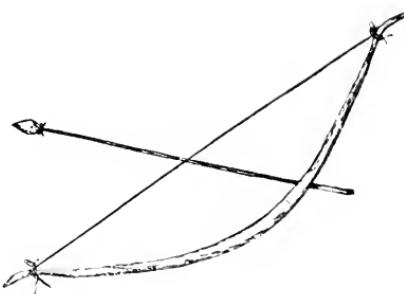
ages ago, an age being reckoned as one hundred snows or winters.

The other best preserved work of primitive man is the one known as Fort Hill, three miles north of Leroy, on a point of land formed by the junction of a small stream called Fordham's brook with Allen's creek. The best view of this fortification is had at the north of it, on the road from Bergen. From this point one may easily imagine that it was erected as a fortification by a large and powerful army looking for an inaccessible bulwark of defense.

In the great contest for supremacy in North America, between France and England the Senecas played a conspicuous part. Both French and English claimed the Iroquois as subjects,

but the Senecas always claimed independence. The Neuter nation occupied all the territory north of Lake Erie from the Detroit river eastward, until their lands met those of the Iroquois near the Genesee river.

In 1651 the Senecas, always on the war path for a slight cause, attacked them, and in a short but fierce campaign wiped them out as a nation, incorporating the few remaining into their own tribe. The Senecas thereafter claimed title to this land gained by conquest and the other Indian tribes, holding them in fear and respect, recognized their claim. In 1679 and 1719 they granted the French important rights on the Niagara river, but refused equal rights to the English. In 1725 they

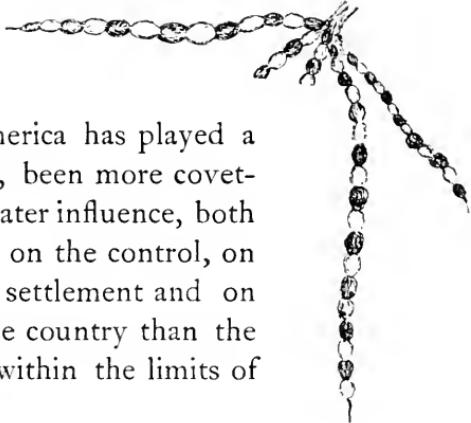




allowed the French to build a stone fort at the mouth of the river

While the Indians made many treaties and gave land deeds, they did not feel particularly bound by them if they interfered with their pleasure or convenience, and Indian giver is a term used to describe one from whom a person dislikes to receive a gift, not knowing how soon its return may be desired. When two nations claim the same territory there is bound to be trouble, and so the French and English came in contact. What one nation acquired by deeds from the Indians they were obliged afterwards to acquire by arms from the other nations, and finally under treaty to surrender to a new nation.

It has been said that no one spot of



land in North America has played a more important part, been more coveted, and exerted a greater influence, both in peace and war, on the control, on the growth, on the settlement and on the civilization of the country than the few acres embraced within the limits of old Fort Niagara.

Beginning with 1651, for eighteen years the Indians owned the land where Fort Niagara stands; for fifty-six years more the Indians owned it, but the French influence was much in evidence; still another period of thirty-four years of Indian ownership, but occupied by the French; then five years of Indian ownership, with occupation by the English. Now Indian ownership no longer. For twenty-four years the



English owned and occupied the spot for which they had longed and worked for eighty years. Then came American ownership with English occupation, and finally American ownership and occupation.

In the fall of 1763 Pontiac had organized his great conspiracy, and the Senecas, whose hostility to the English had been noted by Sir William Johnson two years before, and which was partly due to their bitterness at their loss of the business at the portage—Englishmen now monopolizing that business and employing carts instead of Indian carriers—were ready to and did co-operate with him, urged on thereto, no doubt by French influence and intrigue in what they hoped would prove

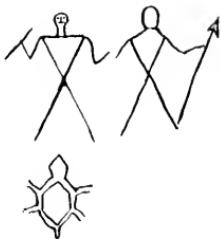
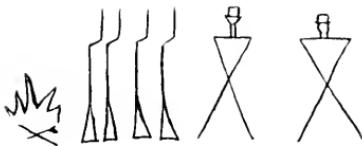
the means of driving the English from Fort Niagara. This hostility of the Senecas had made it necessary to maintain a garrison at the foot well as at the head of the portage; and for large or valuable trains guards of soldiers were furnished from the fort.

On September 14, 1763 a new portage road had been finished between Lewiston and Schlosser, and a train of twenty-five wagons and one hundred horses and oxen guarded by troops from Fort Niagara, variously stated at from twenty-five to three hundred, set out for Schlosser. At the Devil's Hole the Senecas to the number of five hundred ambushed and pillaged the train, threw the wagons and oxen down the bank and slew all but three of the es-



cort and drivers. Hearing the firing the garrison at Lewiston, consisting of two companies, hastened to help their comrades. But the Senecas had prepared an ambush also for this expected action, and all but eight of this force were killed. Some of these eight carried the news to Fort Niagara, whence the commander with all the soldiers, leaving a sufficient guard for the fort, hastened to the scene of the slaughter. The Senecas had fled, but over eighty scalped corpses, including those of six officers, bore bloody witness to their hatred of the English.

On the collapse of Pontiac's bold and partly successful scheme, the Senecas, fearful of receiving at the hands of the English the punishment they so



richly deserved, sent in April, 1764, four hundred men to Sir William Johnson to beg for peace. Now was the time for the English to make the Senecas pay off the Devil's Hole debt, and Sir William Johnson was the man to face the settlement. Yet he was too shrewd to think of demanding life for life, or any galling conditions that would have involved England in a war for the extermination of the Senecas. No; he desired most of all that the Senecas should be the friends of the English, and so he made them pay for their past misdeeds in land. England already had the occupation of this territory along the Niagara river. She wanted also the unquestioned fee. Here was Sir William's chance, and he



improved it. He insisted that besides other conditions the Senecas should cede to England all the land on both sides of Niagara river, from Lake Ontario to Schlosser. The Senecas assented, provided the land be always appropriated to the king's sole use, and provided that a definite treaty be had within three months, and that the lines be run in the presence of Sir William Johnson and the Senecas, so as to preclude any subsequent misunderstandings. Eight chiefs signed the agreement, which, by the way, they never intended to keep, although they left three of their chiefs with Johnson as hostages.

Before this visit of the Senecas, arrangements had already been completed by the British to prevent the recur-

rence of another conspiracy like that of Pontiac. All the tribes whose friendship, with a reasonable expectation of its permanency could be obtained by presents and good treatment, were to be secured in this way. Against all others armies were to be sent to crush and overawe them.

The occasion when the above treaty was to be ratified, was a general meeting of all Indian tribes who desired peace at Fort Niagara in July, 1764, to which Johnson had already invited them, in order to readjust their relations with the English government. Two military expeditions were planned, one for the west under General Bradstreet, 1,200 strong, which assembled at Oswego in June, where it was joined by

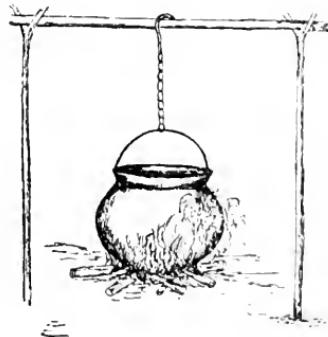


Sir Wm. Johnson, with 550 Iroquois. They reached Niagara July 3, 1764, and found there such a scene of activity as one can hardly conceive of to-day.

Over one thousand Indians, representing many tribes, extending from Nova Scotia to the headwaters of the Mississippi, whose numbers a few days later were increased to 2,060, were assembled to meet and treat with Johnson. Such a representative concourse of Indians had never before been seen. Their wigwams stretched far across the fields, and to this picturesque scene were now added the white tents of Bradstreet's men. Many reasons had induced this great assemblage of the Indians. Some came to make peace because the aid from the French had not

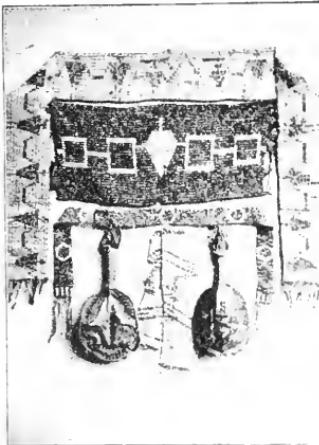
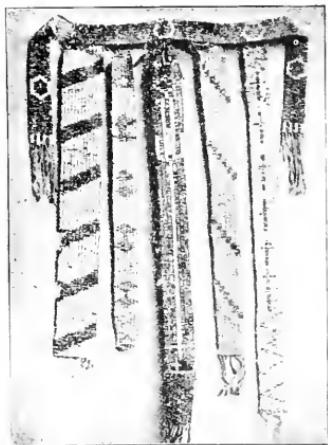
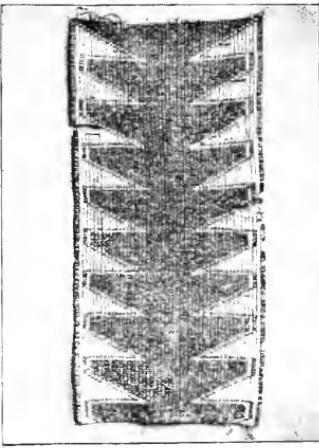
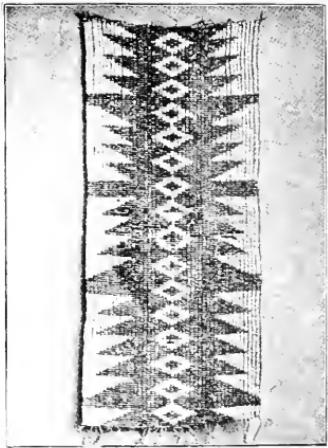
been forthcoming ; some because they were tired of war ; some because they needed clothing, ammunition, etc., and could get them in no other way ; some to protest their friendship for the English ; some by an early submission to avert retribution for past offenses ; some came as spies, and some, no doubt, because they knew that at such a time firewater would be easily obtainable.

Though this assemblage consisted of peace-desiring savages, their friendly disposition was not certain. Several straggling soldiers were shot at, and great precautions were taken by the English garrison to avert a rupture. The troops were always on their guard while the black muzzles of the cannons thrust from the bastions of the fort





struck a wholesome awe into the savage throng below. But among all the throng the Senecas were not present, in spite of their promise to ratify their agreement at this time. They were at home considering whether they would keep it or not, for they had already made an alliance with other tribes against the English. Notice was sent to them that unless they at once fulfilled their agreement the army, then at Niagara, would forthwith march against them and burn their villages. A large body of this warlike tribe overawed by this menace, at once went to Niagara. It took all the diplomacy, shrewdness and influence of Sir William Johnson to preserve order and peace among the savages. Many who had



HISTORIC WAMPUM OF THE SIX NATIONS.



been hostile to each other, and but lately fighting against the English. The business of the assemblage detained him at the fort for a month.

The council room was crowded from morning until evening ; but the tiresome formalities which had to be observed on such occasions, the speeches made and the replies thereto, the smoking of pipes, the distribution of presents, the judicious serving out of whiskey, the terms of each treaty, the tax on the memory of remembering what each belt of wampum given by and received from each tribe meant, while fatiguing, were finally brought to a successful end. One point of policy was rigidly adhered to. Johnson would hold no general conference ; with each tribe he either



made a separate treaty, or where satisfactory treaties were in existence he merely tightened the chain of friendship. By this course he made the best of terms, by promoting a rivalry among the tribes. He also thus discouraged a feeling of union and of a common cause among them. First of all he met the Senecas, and till their agreements had been ratified and the lines of the land to be deeded to the English had been settled; Sir William would transact no other business.

The Senecas ratified their former agreement, and on August 6th they deeded to the English crown a strip of land four miles wide on each bank of the Niagara river from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, thus adding to their for-



READING THE WAMPUM, 1890.



mer agreement all the land from Schlosser to Lake Erie on both sides of the river. General Bradstreet had asked Johnson to try and get this extra cession, in order that England might have title to the land where Fort Erie, at the source of the Niagara on the Canadian side now stands. He was anxious to build a depot for provisions there. Johnson asked for it. The Senecas were ready to do anything asked of them while that English army was on the ground, so they readily consented. They specially excepted from their grant and gave to Johnson personally, as a gift, all the islands in the Niagara river, and he promptly gave them to his sovereign. This was the first tract of land in the limits of the present



Western New York to which the Indian title was absolutely extinguished, and this remarkable land deal, so vast in the amount of territory involved, so beneficial to the whites in the power it gave them for trade and the settlement of the country, and of such enormous subsequent value in view of very recent developments along this frontier, was closed 137 years ago, within the historic fortifications of Fort Niagara. From this time on for fully thirty years the Senecas were allied with and espoused the cause of the English. The treatise with the many other tribes were then arranged without difficulties. The cost of this Indian congress at Niagara was considerable. The expense of provisions for the Indians only was

£25,000 New York currency, equal to about \$10,000, while £38,000 sterling, \$190,000, was expended for presents made to them.

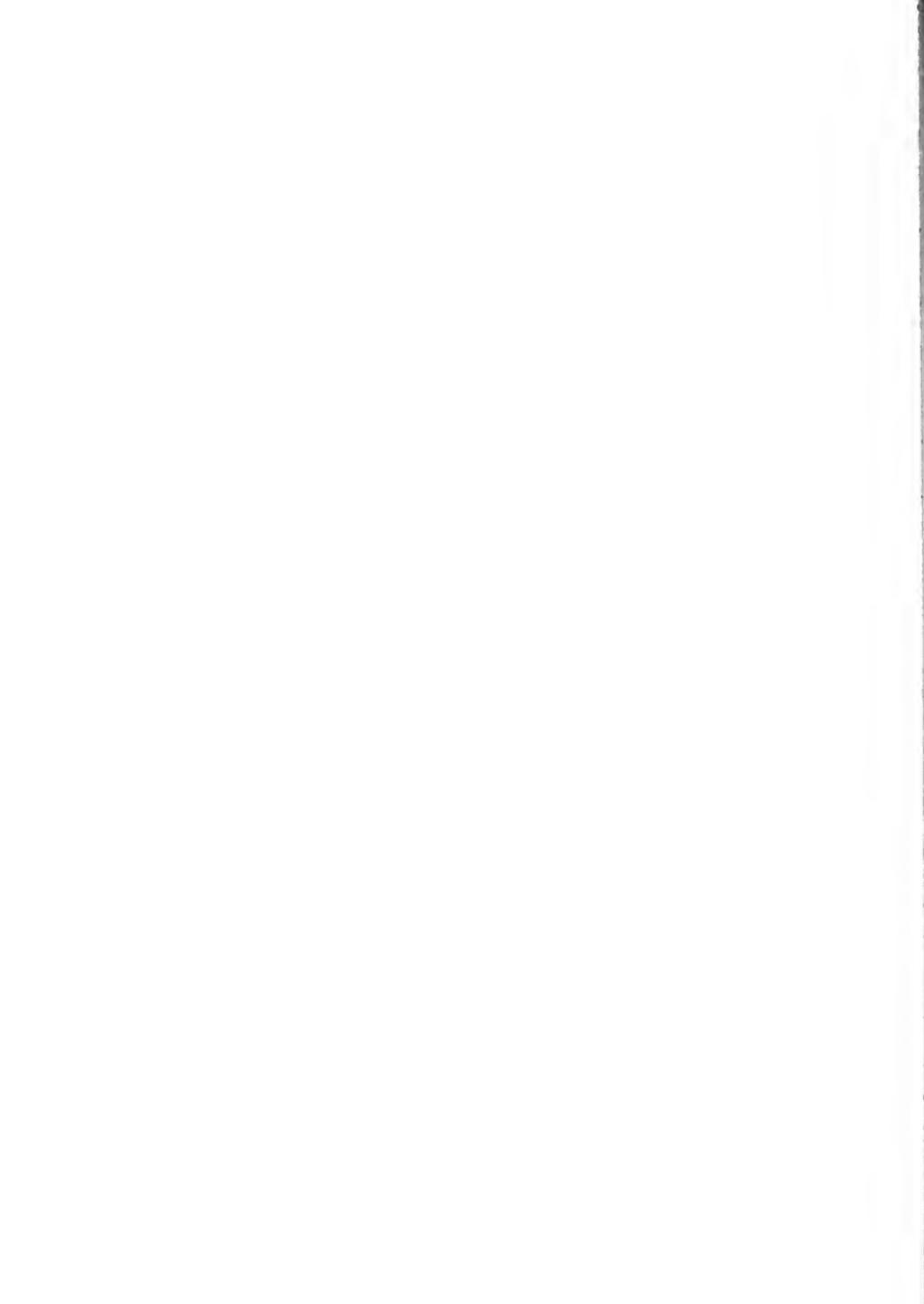


V.

RED JACKET, whose war-whoop rang along the banks of Tonawanda creek was an orator of whom any nation might be proud, and as if by common consent the Senecas were allowed the head war chief. He was also at the head of the Iroquois. He was born about 1750, where the town of Geneva now stands at the foot of Seneca lake. He laid no claim to noble descent; he came of an ordinary Indian family, who undoubtedly did not expect great things from him, as he was small and insignificant for an Indian; Red Jacket made up the deficiency by his immense



RED JACKET.



conceit. He evinced no predilection for war; in fact did not go upon the war path till the invasion of his country, when he was 29 years of age forced every Iroquois to defend his home. He was a swift runner in his youth, and called Otetiani or Always Ready. His own people used him as a messenger, and during the Revolutionary war he was useful as a runner, but more useful as an orator possessing unusual intelligence. As a reward for his services he was presented a red or scarlet jacket, richly embroidered. Imagine for yourself his feelings when Otetiani donned this, which gave him the name by which he was afterward known by the whites. He was so delighted that at the close of the war, when the Amer-



cans wished to gain his favor, he was kept well supplied with red jackets.

The opposite of Red Jacket, the Seneca, was Brant, the Mohawk. One from the east end of the Long House, the other from the west. Brant, tall and muscular, with large bright eyes and broad, low forehead. Red Jacket small, wiry, with little sharp eyes looking out from overhanging brows, and a towering forehead. Brant was the grandson of a chief reared under Christian influences, educated among the whites, a member of the Episcopal church and gentlemanly in his bearing. Red Jacket was an Indian of the Indians, hated civilization, detested education and Christianizing influences and did not pretend to conform to the

usages of society. Brant was proud ; had gained his influence as a warrior. Red Jacket was vain and lacked courage. He was very smart and had no scruples as to what means he used to gain influence. They were both great men among the Six Nations, both patriotic, both loved their own people and customs, and preferred them to those of the whites. Brant hated Red Jacket heartily, and could find no excuse for the lack of courage shown by him. Brant was prompt with his aid in the English cause. Red Jacket was a young man with gifts, was not a warrior, and unscrupulous as to which cause he espoused so long as he gained influence. The two naturally clashed. Brant called Red Jacket the cow killer,



claiming that Red Jacket with his eloquence urged his people to fight, but when the fight came off he was missing, having stayed at home to eat up a cow which he had captured. The brave Seneca chief Cornplanter had as much of a dislike for Red Jacket as Brant, calling him an intriguer. The story is told of a dinner at which Red Jacket was a guest. Cornplanter told the story of the cow as though some other Indian was concerned. Brant and Cornplanter enjoyed the joke hugely; Red Jacket was confused, and could not conceal it. When some one seemingly quizzed Red Jacket as to his prowess, he responded: "I am an orator; I was born an orator;" and judging from accounts he must have been a

very eloquent speaker. His name Sagoyewatha, or "He keeps them awake," applied to him by his contemporaries, would indicate the esteem with which his powers of oratory were held. Red Jacket was a favorite with the squaws; they always chose him to speak for them when they were allowed to have a voice in the meeting of the great council of the Six Nations. In 1794 he said for them that they wished to remark that they fully agreed with their Sachems that the white people had caused the troubles of the Indians. The white people had squeezed them together until it gave them a pain at their hearts, and they thought the white people ought to give back all the lands which they had taken. One of the



white women said Red Jacket had told the Indians to repent at the last meeting, and the Indian women now called on the white people to repent, for they needed repentance as much as the Indians. During this conference Red Jacket often addressed the Commissioner, Col. Pickering, and a few quotations may enable the reader to form an idea of his ability :

“ We stand on a small island in the bosom of the great waters ; we are encircled, we are encompassed ; the evil spirit rides upon the blast and the waters are disquieted ; they rise, they press upon us, and the waves settle over us ; we disappear forever. Who then lives to mourn for us ? None ! What marks our extermination ? Nothing.”

Once during the council, Mr. Morris, who was acting as an agent, remarked that the lands in their present state were worth but little. Red Jacket admitted that, but said that the knowledge of ownership was of great value to the Indian. That knowledge is everything to us, said he; it raises us in our own estimation. It creates in our bosom a proud feeling, which elevates us as a nation. Observe the difference in which a Seneca and an Oneida are held. We are courted, while the Oneidas are considered a degraded people, fit only to make brooms and baskets. Why the difference? It is because the Senecas are land owners, while the Oneidas are cooped up in a narrow space. At the close of the meeting





Red Jacket, although openly opposing the terms of the treaty, secretly asked permission to place his name at or near the top.

Red Jacket visited Philadelphia in 1792. While there he was presented with a large silver medal by President Washington. On it was represented Washington in military attire handing a peace pipe, about four feet long, to a conventional Indian with a tuft of plumes growing out of his head. A white man was plowing with a yoke of oxen in the background. Red Jacket prized this medal highly, and wore it on all state occasions.

While in Philadelphia each member of the deputation of chiefs was presented with a suit of military clothes by

General Knox. When Red Jacket's suit was presented him, he sent back word that he could not wear it, as he was not a warrior, but a peace chief. He asked for a citizen's suit, keeping the military until he received the other. When the suit of plain clothes was brought him he refused to give up the military suit, saying that when war came he could wear it with propriety. When he returned from his visit to the capitol he was accustomed to impress the Indians with exaggerated stories of the treatment he had received from the President. Gathering his people he would rehearse the scenes and repeat the compliments he pretended the President had paid him. Perhaps the greatest trial to which he was subjected

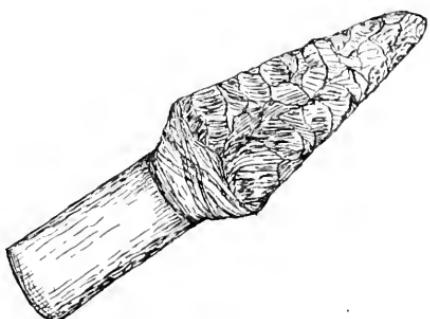


was when a brother of Cornplanter, who pretended to be a prophet, tried to convince the nation that Red Jacket was a witch. The chief's life was in danger, and his trial was held in solemn council. He made his own defense for three hours. His eloquence moved his audience in spite of themselves. Opinion was divided and a bare majority were in favor of Red Jacket, so that his life was saved.

At one time he was called as a witness in a murder trial, and examined with regard to Indian laws and customs. The prosecutor, wishing to exclude his testimony, asked him if he believed in God? More truly than one who could ask such a question, was his indignant answer. In answer to the question as

to his rank, he replied, look at the papers which the white men keep most carefully ; they will tell you who I am, referring to the treaties by which the whites had acquired their lands. He saw that the lawyers and bystanders were ridiculing the Indian superstitions. What, he exclaimed, do you denounce us as fools for believing what you believed two hundred years ago ? Your ministers thundered this doctrine from their pulpits ; your judges pronounced it from the bench ; it was sanctioned by the law ; now would you punish one unfortunate brother for adhering to his father's faith ?

Red Jacket's course during the war of 1812 was an honorable one ; he sided with the Americans, and fought





well. He proposed to General Brown that the Indians be withdrawn from the British and American armies, which was accomplished, he promising to return and assist General Brown if necessary. At the close of the war his one idea was to prevent the whites from encroaching with their religion and customs upon his people. He considered the school and the church but the advance agents of the settler with his ax. There were two distinct parties, one pagan, the other Christian. When asked why he hated the missionaries he replied they do us no good ; if they are useful to the whites why do they send them to the Indians ? In reply to a question from a lady as to whether he had any children living, he said :

Red Jacket was once a great man and in favor with the Great Spirit. He was a lofty pine among the smaller trees of the forest, but after years of glory he degraded himself by drinking the firewater of the white man. The Great Spirit has looked upon him in anger and, His lightning has stripped the pine of its branches. Upon his second wife joining the church he abandoned her. Reconciliation was brought about by a little girl; Red Jacket returned to his home, promising never to interfere with his wife's religion, and he kept his promise. Before he left her his wife was obliged to steal away in order to go to church; now he would call his daughter early Sunday morning, saying, come it is Sunday ; get



up and get the work all done so as to go to church with your mother.

The words spoken when christening a vessel named after him are interesting : " You have a great name given to you," said he, addressing the ship ; " strive to deserve it. Be brave and daring ; go boldly into the great lakes, and fear neither the swift wind nor the strong waves ; be not frightened nor overcome by them, for it is in resisting storms and tempests that I whose name you bear obtained my renown ; let my example inspire you to courage and lead you to glory." Red Jacket with great difficulty acquired table manners. He once told that when he dined with Washington a man ran off with his knife and fork every now and then, and

returned with others. As a young man he had often hunted in the Genesee Valley; as an old man he visited the valley, and on entering the forest resolved to have one more hunt. He had not gone far before he saw an opening. A fence was in the way, and white men were plowing in the distance. The chief sadly turned in another direction ; he had, as he supposed, buried himself deep in the forest, and when he came upon the white man's field the old man sat down and wept.

After his health declined and he knew that he must die, he visited the cabins of his friends and talked over the affairs of his people. I am about to leave you, he said, and when my voice is no longer heard the craft and power of the



white man will prevail. Many winters have I breasted the storm, but I am an aged tree and can stand no longer. My leaves are fallen, my branches are withered, and I am shaken with every breeze; soon my aged trunk will be prostrate, and the foot of the exulting foe of the Indian will be planted upon it in safety; for I have none who will be able to avenge such an indignity. Think not I mourn for myself. I go to join the spirits of my fathers, but my heart fails me when I think of my people, who are soon to be scattered and forgotten. Bury me by the side of my wife, and let my funeral be in accord with the customs of our nation. Let me be dressed and equipped as my fathers were, that their spirits may re-



WM. C. HOAG.

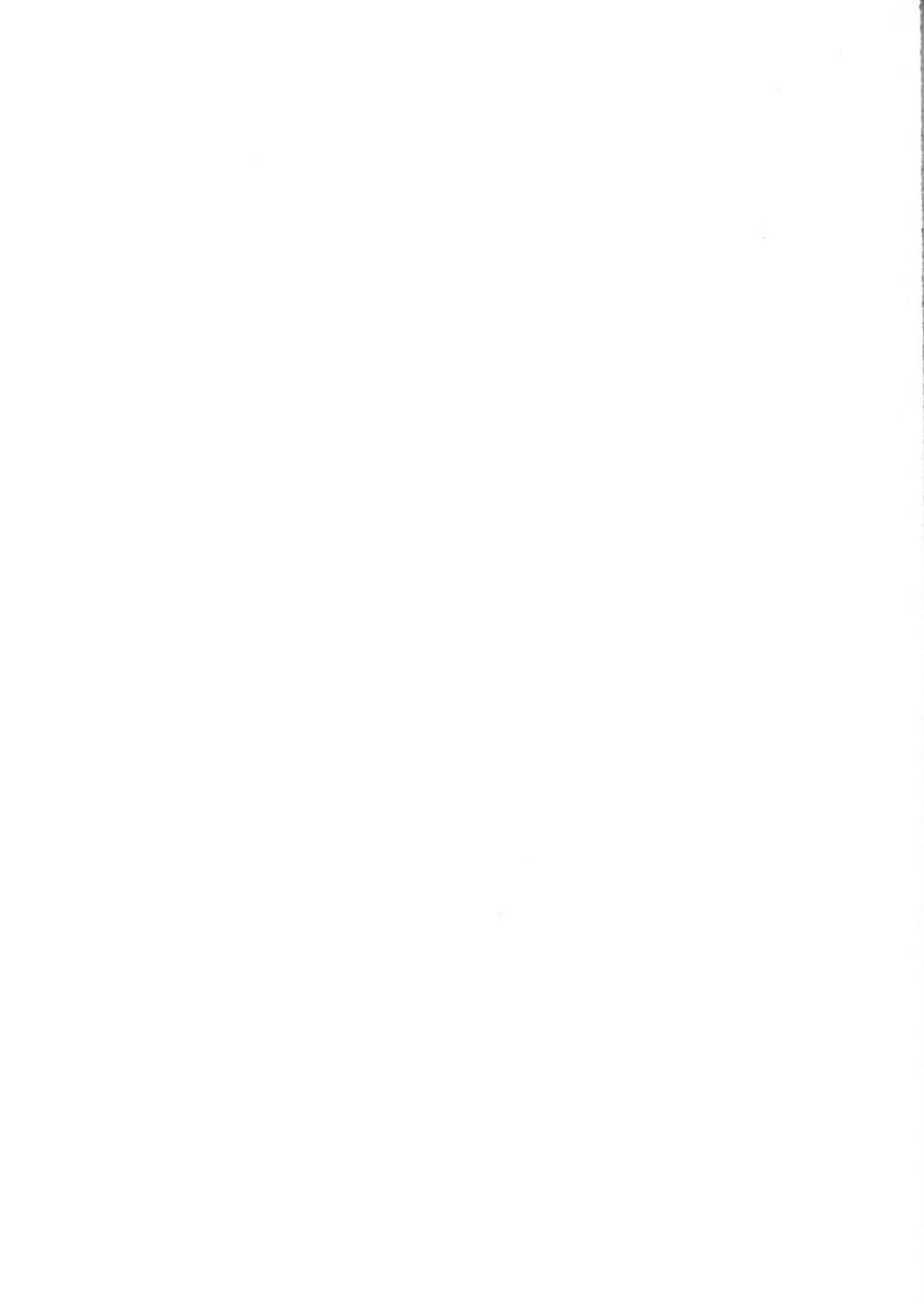


HARRISON HALFTOWN.



ALFRED JIMERSON.

SENECA.



joice at my coming. Almost the last thing the old chief did was to call a council of both parties among his people and recommend that they should quarrel no more, but each believe according to his own way. He was taken suddenly during this council and never recovered, meeting death bravely at the age of 78 years.

Cornplanter (Gy-ant-wā-ka) was one of the wisest of the Senecas. As an adviser no one was more esteemed. He was born at Ca-na-wau-gus; later in life he lived on the Alleghany river, although closely identified with the Genesee Senecas. He had a strain of white blood which was quite noticeable, he being much lighter in color than the other chiefs. He was among the first



to adopt the white man's costume, and in later years might easily have been taken for a well-to-do farmer. He was easy in manner and correct in morals. He ranked above Red Jacket as a warrior, and was but little inferior to him as an orator. He took part against the colonists in the war of the Revolution, and after its close down to Wayne's victory in 1794 was quite unsettled. He was older than Red Jacket, and was pardonably jealous of that rising young man. He lived to a very old age, and finally resigned his chieftainship in a very odd way. It was one of the strange customs of the Iroquois to interpret dreams. An Indian would go from wigwam to wigwam and ask the inmates to interpret a dream he had

had. If they gave him an interpretation that suited him he would accept it and act accordingly. Cornplanter had a dream that puzzled him. Almost naked, in midwinter, he went from house to house to have his dream interpreted ; on the third day he found an Indian who said : " After this you shall be called O-no-no, or cold. You have been a chief long enough for the good of your nation; you have grown too old to be of much further use as a counselor or warrior, and you must appoint a successor if you wish to be in favor with the Great Spirit. You must remove from your house, and light every article made by the white man." Cornplanter accepted this interpretation. All the presents



he had received he solemnly burned ; his tomahawk was the only thing preserved ; that he sent to the Indian he had chosen as his successor.

Handsome Lake (Ga-ne-o-di-yo), was a half-brother of Cornplanter, and stood high as a medicine man and spiritual guide. Once when a young Indian girl was sick her friends sent him her clothes. He took them, laid a handful of tobacco on the fur, and as it burned delivered an address to the Great Spirit. After a moment's silence he said, after looking at her clothes : " This affliction is a punishment to her for cruelly drowning a nest of young robins, and a few hours later for repeating the offense. Two young deer must be killed, a yearling buck and a yearling

doe. The whole of both must be cooked, and the entire village invited to the feast, to be followed by a dance." Some days were spent in finding the deer, after which the request was complied with and the girl recovered. This wise medicine man was of medium size, goodly presence, and modest and quiet in demeanor.

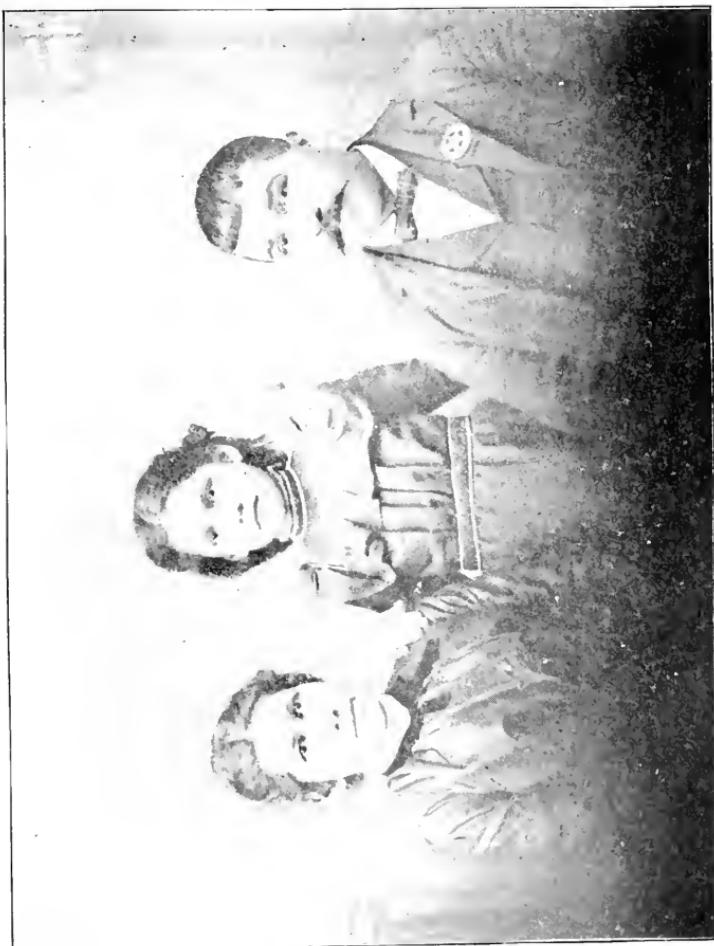
Tall Chief was born at an Indian village located across the river from Mt. Morris, on Murray's Hill. The spring where he got his supply of water is still in use, and bears his name. A bed of tansy planted by him still flourishes near the site of his lodge. He was said to resemble Henry Clay—straight as an arrow, always cool and self-possessed. Tall Chief's name ap-

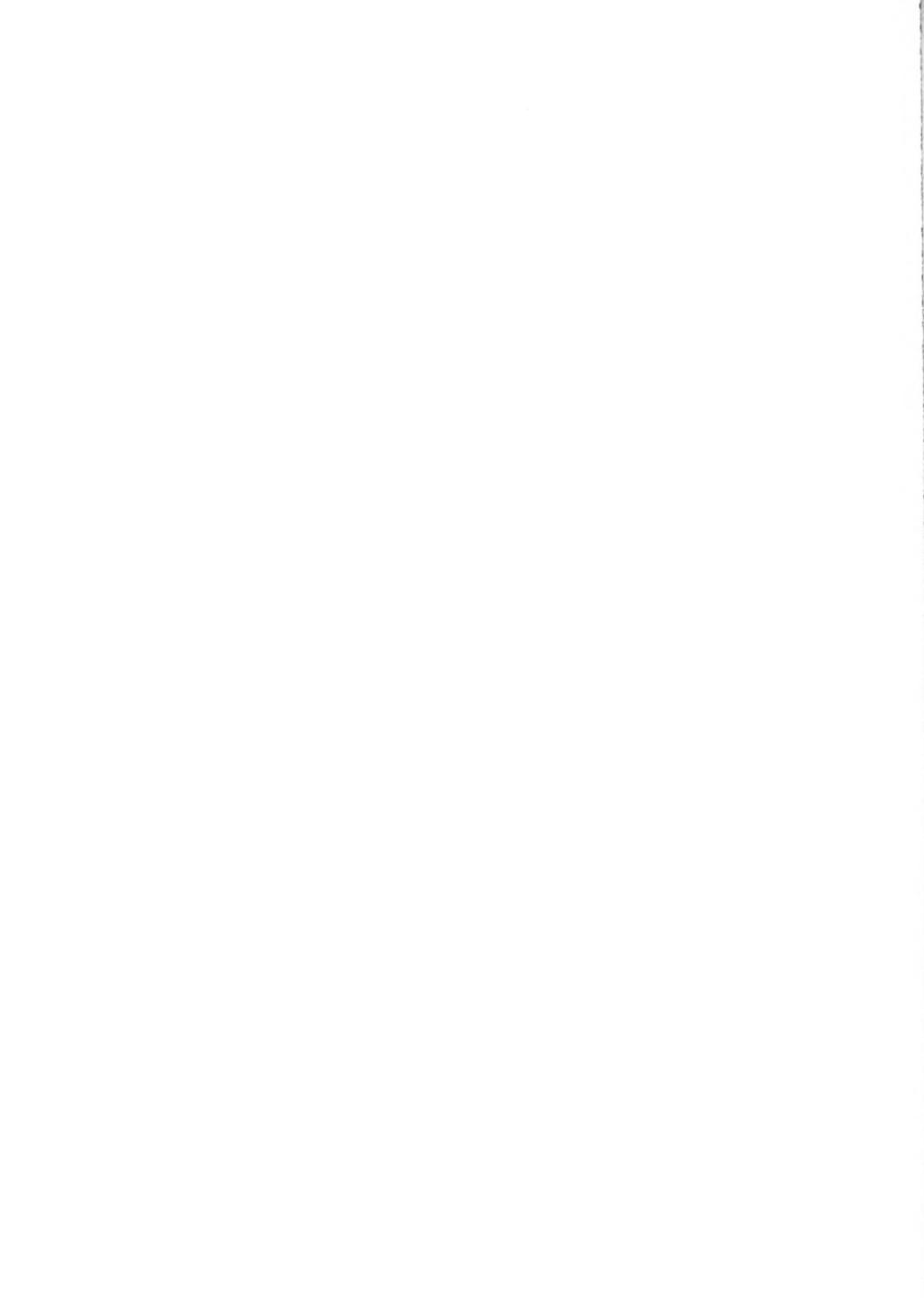


pears in the big tree treaty, and is otherwise associated with the affairs of his nation. He was once entertained by Washington on the occasion of a visit of a deputation of chiefs to Washington, sent to smoke the pipe of peace with the President. After a ceremonious dinner a big pipe was lighted, and after the President smoked he handed the pipe to Tall Chief, who felt highly honored, and always enjoyed referring to this occasion. In 1828 he removed to Tonawanda where he died not long after.

SOLON SHANKS, WIFE AND DAUGHTER.

U. S. MARSHAL, SENECA'S,





VI.

THE Iroquois resided in permanent villages. Not digging wells, they located their villages upon lakes or rivers, or near large springs. About the time of the formation of the Confederacy, when they were liable to the encroachments of the hostile tribes, their villages were protected by stockades that were constructed by digging trenches several feet deep around several acres of land. Throwing up the ground on the inside, they set a continuous row of posts on their bank of earth, at such an angle that they projected over the trench; sometimes the row of posts was doubled or tripled.

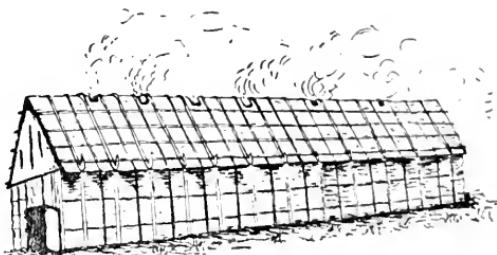


Inside this enclosure they constructed their bark houses or wigwams. Around this on the outside was the village field, consisting of several hundred acres of land, divided into planting lots belonging to different families, separated by uncultivated ridges. One of the oldest of these villages was at the head of Canandaigua lake. On the village site of Lima was also one of their oldest towns.

About the commencement of the 17th century, when they became powerful enough to protect themselves from the inroads of the surrounding tribes, only the Mohawks and Oneidas constructed stockades, and those only to protect themselves from the attacks of the French. The modern village was

a cluster of houses planted at irregular intervals over a large area. Nothing like street arrangements were known; two houses seldom fronting the same line, being grouped sufficiently near for a neighborhood.

Their villages at an early date were reckoned by the number of houses. When the village was scattered over a large area the houses were made single and designed for only one family. When compact, as in ancient times, the houses were built long, ranging from 50 to 130 feet in length and about 16 feet in width, divided into compartments each 12 feet; and accommodated several families, each department being in fact a separate house, having a fire in the center, accommodating two families,





having one upon each side. Thus a house one hundred and twenty feet long would contain ten fires and twenty families. It is not improbable that the largest village of the Iroquois numbered 3,000 inhabitants. The bark house was a simple structure. When single it was 12x15 feet on the ground, and from 15 to 20 feet high. The frame consisted of upright poles set well in the ground, five or six on the sides and four in the end, including corners. Upon the forks of these poles, about ten feet from the ground, cross poles were laid, to which the rafter poles were tied with bark, the poles being bent from one side to the other, forming an arched roof. When the frame was completed it was usually covered

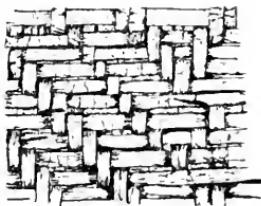
with red elm or white ash bark, laid rough side out. The bark was flattened and dried, then cut in the form of boards. To hold these boards another row of poles was placed on the outside, and by means of splints and bark rope fastenings the boards were secured horizontally between them. It usually required four lengths of boards and four courses from the ground to the rafters to cover a side, as they were lapped at the ends as well as clapboarded, also in the same proportion for the ends. In like manner the roof was covered with bark boards, smaller in size, with the rough side out and the grain running up and down, the boards being stitched through and through with fastenings, and these held between the frames of



poles as on the sides. In the center of the roof was an opening for the smoke, the fire being upon the ground in the center of the house, and the smoke ascending without the guidance of a chimney. At the two ends of the house were doors, either of bark hung upon hinges of wood, or of deer or bear skins suspended before the opening. However long the house, or whatever number of fires, these were the only entrances. Over these entrances was cut the totem or tribal device of the head of the family within. Upon the two sides were arranged wide seats, also of bark boards, about two feet from the ground, well supported underneath, and reaching the entire length of the house. Upon these they spread their

mats of skins, also their blankets, using them as seats by day and couches at night. Similar berths upon each side, about five feet above, and secured to the frame of the house, thus furnishing accommodation for the family. Upon the cross poles near the roof were hung in bunches, braided together by the husks, the winter supply of corn.

Charred and dried corn and beans were generally stored in bark barrels and stowed away in corners. Their implements for the chase, domestic utensils, weapons, etc., were stored away or hung up wherever an unoccupied spot could be found. A house of this description would accommodate a family of eight with the limited wants





of the Indian, and afford necessary shelter for their stores.

After they had learned the use of the ax they began to substitute houses of hewn logs, but they were constructed after the ancient model. Many of the houses in the Valley of the Genesee were of this description.

There was another species of house or wigwam, either for temporary use or a small family. It was triangular at the base, the frame consisting of three poles on a side, meeting at the top with space sufficient for a chimney opening, being covered with bark similar to the others. During the hunt, houses of this description were often erected.

The Iroquois were accustomed to bury their surplus corn and also their

charred green corn in caches, in which the former would be preserved for a year and the latter for a longer period. I have found charred corn and beans in the earthworks near Leroy and Oakfield. They excavated a pit, made a bark bottom and sides, and having deposited the corn placed a bark roof over it, then covered the whole with earth. Cured venison and other meats were stored in like manner, except with the addition of deer skin under the bark.

“Very spacious was the wigwam
Made of deerskin dressed and whitened.”

So sings the poet, but compared with our modern homes the wigwam would hardly be considered spacious. Still it was a home, and though relentless on





IROQUOIS.

the warpath, we read that the hospitality of the Senecas to friends was unbounded. Their captives were many, and on their reservations may still be found descendants of the Cherokee, Seminole, Illinois and Catawbas captured by them on their raids. Our admiration and wonder are attracted to them when it is learned that in all the numerous cases of captivity escape from the captors was never undertaken. If of their own race and color he soon forgot that he was in the wigwam of strangers. Social and political courtesies were extended him. Were his family left behind they were brought to him. The interests of the captors and the ones captured were identical. So it was to a great degree with our own



race, many of whom were made captives, but not degraded, and there being no restraint or coercion the desire for escape entirely disappeared. They invariably preferred remaining rather than return to their own kindred. The freedom of outdoor life, and the influence of kindness tended to produce this state of affairs.

The Indian mother knew no difference between the natural and adopted child; no discrimination, or if any, in favor of the ward. The government rested lightly on the people, who were really governed but little. An individual independence that the Senecas knew well how to prize was created, and then, as at the present time, the self-governing people were the happiest.



But little can be said of their progress in art or science, still their integrity, unbounded hospitality, unbroken fidelity, inborn sentiments so conspicuous in their character, form ornaments that no art of education can bestow.

The character of our Indian predecessors in the "Realm of the Senecas" will stand the search light of investigation and challenge the admiration of the investigators. It has been proved that the dog was the first wild animal domesticated by man, and Townsend says: "The dog is the greatest conquest man ever made, as the dog was the first element in human progress. Without the dog man would have been compelled to vegetate eternally in the swaddling clothes of savagery. It

was the dog that effected the passage of human society from the savage to the patriarchial state, in making possible the guardianship of the flock. It is to the dog that man owed his hours of leisure in which he made observations that led him to advance and rise in the scale of human progress.” All honor to the dog if this be true, and every mongrel cur should receive some measure of respect from the race he has so greatly benefitted. And when one thinks of the amount of abuse heaped upon him is it any wonder that in the face of such ingratitude he occasionally goes mad?

They were all a race of hunters, living upon the fruits of the chase, and making their clothing and wigwams of





the skins of the animals with which the forests abounded. The necessities of hunter life divided great families into tribes and bands. Homes and villages were moved as often as stern necessity compelled them to seek new fields in the pursuit of game.

Cusick, the celebrated Indian narrator, gives some very interesting stories in regard to their allotment of homes to the various tribes. He says the Senecas were directed to settle south of Canandaigua lake, on a spot known as Bare Hill. Some one was sent from the Great Spirit to instruct them in the duties of life. He gave them seeds, directed them in their use, and also gave them dogs to aid in taking game. Prosperity was on all hands, but the

emissary of the Great Spirit returned to the heavens. Monsters then appeared, devouring the people and devastating the country. These monsters were no borrowed prodigy, but creations of his untutored mind. The flying head being one of these, said to invade their houses at night, devouring the inmates, compelling the people to construct houses that it could not enter. Such a being has no prototype. This hobgoblin with features of a man, with mane and two hairy legs, appeared to have dreaded fire, as an illustration shows the monster in the act of being frightened away by a woman who was eating before a fire.

The Senecas of the Genesee were noted for their good husbandry. Gen-





eral Sullivan speaks of finding corn grown by them with ears twenty-two inches long. Squashes, beans, melons and wild fruits were found in great abundance. Tobacco was also successfully cultivated. Their cultivated fields were confined to a narrow strip of land along the banks of the Genesee river and the small tributary streams. Good and evil spirits played an important part in Iroquoian mythology, and the following myth relating to the vegetable world is described by Ermina Smith. Among the good spirits are the three sisters who still continue to preside over the favorite vegetables, corn, beans and squashes. They are represented to us as loving each other very dearly and dwelling together in peace and



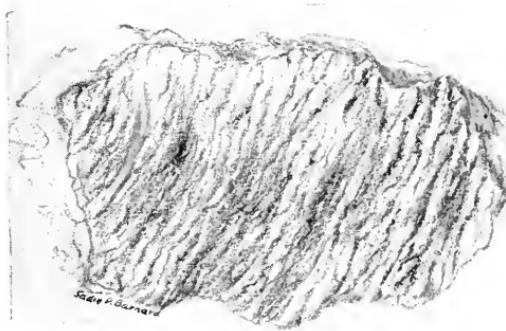
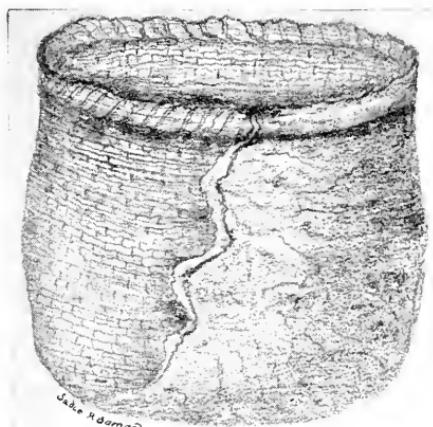
unity. The vines of the vegetables grow on the same soil and cling lovingly around each other. The spirit of corn is supposed to be draped with its long leaves and silken tassels. The sister who guards the bean has a wreath of its velvety pods with garments of its delicate tendrils. While the spirit of squashes is clothed with the brilliant blossoms under her care. On bright nights the sisters can be seen flitting about or heard rustling among the tall corn. To this day yearly festivals are held in their honor, and they are appealed to as our life and supporters.

Relics of the Indians often tell a story or reveal a page of history as forcibly as any written account. Although as silent as the grave in which



they were placed, they form a direct connection between the discoverer and the one who made and used them, clothing the unwritten history of the period which they represent with perpetual freshness. However rude and though indicating an uncultured people, they are ever invested with interest. It is greatly to be regretted that so few specimens of the skill and ingenuity of the Iroquois have come down to us.

A full description of their implements, utensils and fabrics would be impossible to furnish, although many of their inventions are still preserved by Indians living on the various reservations. Nearly all that portion of them that seemed to illustrate the condition of the hunter life have passed



FRAGMENT OF WICKER POTTERY.

L. of C.



away. The conclusion that man commenced his career at the bottom of the scale and worked his way from savagery to civilization forces itself on the student as he finds traces of progress as shown in the pieces of pottery found that give unmistakable evidence of having been used by primitive man. From the wicker marked fragments (the first pottery having been made with a basket of wicker for a mould) the advance is easily traced by well defined attempts at ornamentation. Commencing with plain marking, made simply to relieve a plain surface, gradually through a course of lines and markings to systematic decoration, showing skill and certainly a knowledge of number and measurements. Early writers claim that the attempt to



make the baskets hold liquids by using clay resulted in a new discovery. The heat finally destroyed the basket, leaving the clay outside as a separate vessel. The material used in all aboriginal pottery is composed of clay, tempered with pounded quartz, shells or fine sand, to prevent shrinkage and resist the action of the fire. Most of it is well burned, but does not show glazing. One fine fragment found is of black incised pottery produced by placing the utensil over a fire made from pitch pine, the oily black smoke coloring and partially glazing. Whenever pottery was buried with the dead, or left behind when moving from one location to another, or when driven away by stronger tribes, the vessels were broken

so as to be rendered useless. In shape the vessels were mostly constructed with gourd-like bottoms, having a ridge or groove around the top to allow for suspension. In some cases they have flat bottoms. The usual size was from one to four quarts. They were ornamented in the simplest and most uniform way, with designs in relief, or impressions made with the finger nail or the top of the finger, with pieces of wood or string pressed into the fresh clay. On the more recent vessels the markings are in the form of straight or zig-zag lines, dots, parallel lines, squares and triangles.

After the intercourse between European nations commenced, vessels of iron, brass, copper and tin super-





seded those of pottery, and its production was discontinued, but the Indian pipe was still considered superior to that of European manufacture.

" From the red stone of the quarry
With his hands he broke a fragment,
Moulded it into a pipe head,
Shaped and fashioned it with figures."

Pipes of various designs are frequently found, some of red clay, mixed with crushed quartz, others clay burned black and having a high polish, others of soapstone. Some have figures of animals, others with representations of the human face. Some of them are finished exquisitely, others cut out of soapstone are the counterpart of those found in the mounds of Ohio and Wisconsin, the bowl and stem cut from a



solid stone occasionally one of red cat-linite, such as those used by the Sioux, but these were probably obtained in trade with the western Indians. One is described by Morgan of black marble, highly polished, with bowl and stem bored with great precision. Like the pipes of the mound builder period it has the bowl in the middle of the stem. In material and workmanship it is superior to the pipes of Iroquois make.

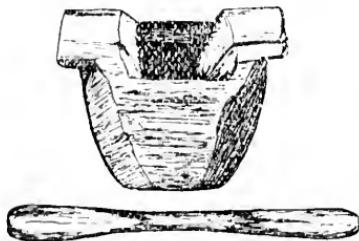
Metallic implements were almost unknown to the Iroquois, as they did not understand the use of metals. Their knives for skinning deer and other game were usually made of flint. The same stone knives or axes were used to make canoes, mortars and other utensils. Some times a stone gouge or





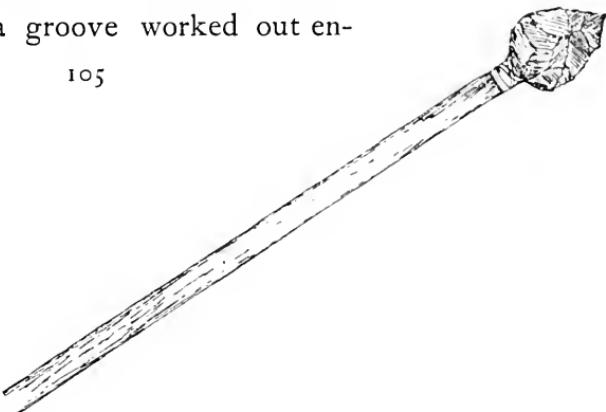
chisel was used called Uh-ga-o-gwat-ha. In cutting trees a fire was built at the foot of a tree and the chisel was used to clear away the coal ; by repeating the process trees were felled and cut to pieces. Wooden vessels were hollowed out, and in primitive times wooden bowls or tubs were coated with a thickness of clay that rendered their surface impervious to fire. When a regular concavity was desired a stone was ground with a convex edge. Stone mortars were used in which to pound corn, mix mineral paint and pulverize roots and barks for medicine.

“ From an oak bough made the arrows,
Tipped with flint and, winged with feathers,
And the cord he made of deer skin,
Then he said to Hiawatha
Go my son into the forest.”



The arrow, spear and lance points were made by flaking the flint into the desired form. They are frequently formed with a twist that would cause them to revolve in their flight. Sometimes the arrow was feathered to produce the same result. They understood the art of securing the greatest penetration with the least possible force. The places where these points were manufactured is easily determined by the quantity of chips of flint that have been made by the cleavage.

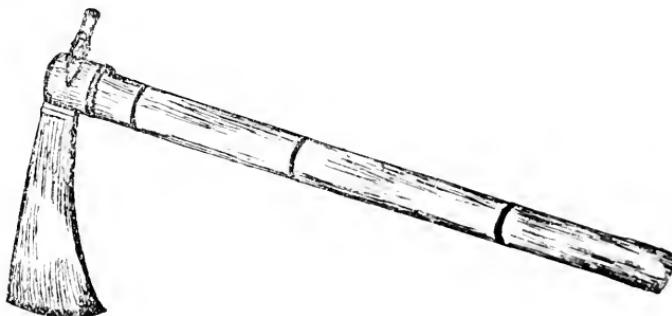
The stone tomahawk was a favorite weapon of the Iroquois, it being shaped something like an ax with a groove fashioned around it, by means of which it was fastened to a handle. Small stones with a groove worked out en-





tirely around are frequently found that were undoubtedly used as the South American Indian of the present day uses the bolas, viz: By attaching a thong two or three feet in length, then by uniting several of these they were given a rotating motion and thrown into a flock of pigeons or ducks, entangling the birds in such a way as to secure one or more of them. Personal ornaments were also constructed of stone and very ingeniously worked. Before the tomahawks came into use the weapons were the bow, the stone hatchet and war club. The Ga-je-wa was a weapon usually made of ironwood, with a large ball or knot at the end, usually about two feet in length, and the ball or knot five or six inches in diameter. In close

quarters it became a formidable weapon. They wore it in a belt. Sometimes a deer horn club was used called ga-ne-u-ga-o-dus-ha, usually made of hard wood, painted and ornamented with feathers. At the end in the lower edge a sharp pointed deer's horn was inserted ; it was a dangerous weapon and inflicted a deep wound. They wore it in a girdle. After the introduction of metal they used a steel or iron point, resembling a spear-head. This spear may now be found among the Iroquois preserved as a relic. The tomahawk succeeded the war club, as the rifle succeeded the bow. The words tomahawk and Indian if not synonomous are inseperable. They are usually made of steel, brass or iron. The choice ones are fitted



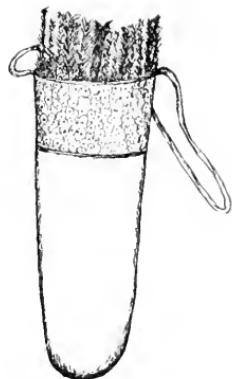


with a pipe bowl, and have a perforated handle for ornament and use, sometimes being inlaid with silver. It is the emblem of war; to bury it meant peace, to dig it up the most deadly warfare.

In 1684, after the French representative M. de la Barre had made a speech to the assembled sachems, concluding with a menace of burning the castles of the five nations, Garangula arose and with great dignity delivered one of the most characteristic specimens of Indian eloquence that has been preserved. Yonnondio is the name applied to the French governor, and Corlear that applied to the English as a generic term. "Hear, Yonnondio, what I say is the voice of all the Five Nations. Hear what they answer. Open your ears to

what they speak. The Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks say that when they buried the hatchet at Cadarocqui (in the presence of your predecessor), in the middle of the fort, they planted the tree of peace in the same place, to be there preserved; that in place of a retreat for soldiers that fort might be a rendezvous for merchants; that in place of arms and amunicions of war, beavers and merchandise should only enter there.

Hear, Yonnondio. Take care for the future that so great a number of soldiers as appear there do not choke the tree of peace planted in so small a fort. It will be a great loss if, after it had so easily taken root, you should stop its growth and prevent its covering





your country and arms with its branches. I assure you, in the name of the Five Nations, that our warriors shall dance to the calumet of peace under its leaves, and shall remain quiet on their mats, and shall never dig up the hatchet till their brothers Yonnondio or Corlear shall, either jointly or separately endeavor to attack the country which the Great Spirit has given to our ancestors. This belt preserve my words, and this other the authority which the Five Nations have given me."

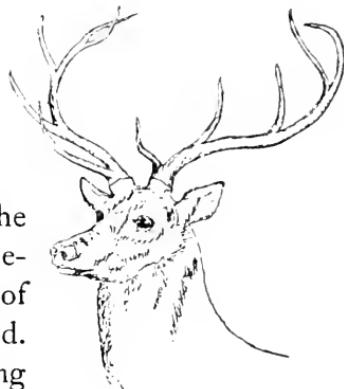
The moccasin was an Indian invention. These were made from the skins of animals, more commonly of deer skin; often worked with beads and porcupine quills. Much more useful.



comfortable and fitting than the sandals and clumsey footwear of the primitive people of the old world. The moccasin was made of one piece of deerskin, seamed up at the heel and front, leaving the bottom seamless. The needles used to perforate the skin were made of stone or bone, taken from the animals ; they were highly polished. They have been found in Genesee and Livingston counties that still retained their polish, after ages of exposure to the frost and sun. The sinews of the deer furnished the thread or cord used. The needles are found in mounds, so we may reasonably suppose that in one respect at least the Iroquois were contemporaries or the successors of the mound builders, who are considered by some a



lost race. The method of tanning the deer skin was ingenious. Tradition tells us that the discovery was accidental; the brain of the deer, mixed with moss, in order to form it into a cake, was thoroughly dried and then preserved for years. When the hide is fresh the hair and flesh are removed by scraping with a wooden or stone scraper, the brain cake dissolved, the skin soaked in it for a few hours; when it is thoroughly dried it is rubbed until pliable—the thick skin requiring a repetition of the process. As the skin is porous and not tough, it is made strong and close by allowing smoke to pass into and through it, until the pores are closed and the skin is thoroughly toughened and changed from a white to a



brown, when it is ready for use. The brains of other animals are sometimes used, as is the backbone of the eel, which is pounded and boiled. Bear skins were prepared by being scraped and softened; they were not tanned. The deer skin, while useful, could not fill every want. In its line bark rope was used by the Indians from time immemorial. In its manufacture the inner bark of the slippery elm, red elm and basswood were used. Having removed the outer bark it was boiled in ashes and water. When taken out it could be separated into strips several feet in length; it was then laid aside for use, slippery elm making the most pliable rope. It could be braided and was very durable, and could be

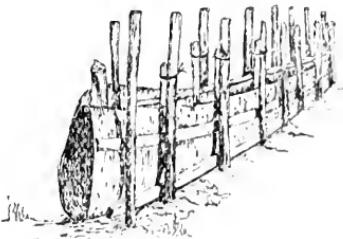


used for carrying burdens, making belts or for any purpose for which leather or hemp rope is used. The squaws often wove bark belts, decorating them with beads and porcupine quills.

Utensils of bark were common among the earlier Iroquois. Bark barrels were constructed from the bark of the red elm, the grain running around the barrel. Up the sides it was stitched securely; both bottom and lid were fastened in the same manner. They were used for storing grain and other goods, and when properly cared for would last a hundred years. Trays of this character were in common use as bread trays for the purpose of kneading or preparing corn bread. Around the rim splints of hickory were bound,

to give it strength. Some of them would hold two and one-half bushels.

Ga-sna-ga-o-wo, or bark canoes, were made by the Iroquois with as great or greater skill than any other people. Birch bark was the best material, but as the canoe birch did not grow in the home territory of the Iroquois, they generally used the bark of the butternut, hickory or red elm. After taking off the bark of the required length and width and removing the rough outside, it was shaped in the canoe form. Thin pieces of white ash or any elastic wood of four inches in width were run around the edge outside and in, and stitched through and through. In stitching they used bark thread. The ribs were of narrow strips of ash placed about a



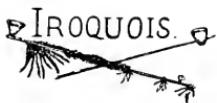


foot apart, and having been turned up at the ends, they were secured under the rim. Both ends of the canoe were fashioned alike; the two side pieces inclining toward each other until they united. They varied in length from 12 feet for two persons to 40 feet for 30 persons.



VII.

IT is interesting to note the several dances indulged in by the Iroquois. With them the dance was considered a thanksgiving ceremonial acceptable to the Great Spirit, but believed to have been designed by Ha-wen-né-yu for their pleasure and worship. It was considered a suitable means for social intercourse between tribes; it also served to arouse patriotic sentiments and kept alive the spirit of the nation. The enthusiasm arising from the dance was wonderful—they were a living reflexion of the Indian mind. The wild music of the rattle accompanying song and rhythmic



movements made a realistic picture of Indian life. The Indian youths' first stir of feeling was kindled by the dance, the first impulse of patriotism was inspired by its influences. The dances were divided into three classes—patriotic, religious and social. The Iroquois had thirty-two distinct dances, twenty-six being of their own invention, twenty-one being still in use among the present Iroquois, each having a separate history, and looked upon with a different degree of favor. Some were executed in costume by chosen dancers. Some for squaws, others for warriors, but the greater part for both sexes. Many have been handed down from so remote a period that tradition does not record their origin. Many were

common to all the red race. Their influence in arousing the Indian spirit and in excluding all thoughts of a different life, and their resultant effects upon the formation of Indian character cannot be too highly estimated. Their hold upon the Iroquois is evinced by the tenacity with which they are, many of them, observed at the present time, the Senecas engaging in them as ardently as did their forefathers two centuries ago. The feather dance and the war dance were the two great performances of the Iroquois; one had a religious and the other a patriotic character. Morgan's description of them is graphic, and we quote the same:

"They were performed by a select band of from fifteen to twenty-five,



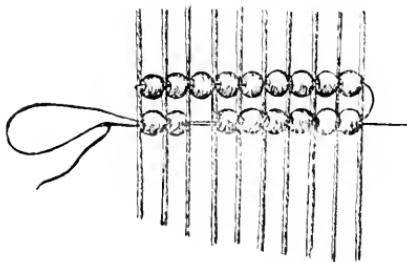
who were distinguished for their powers of endurance, activity and spirit. Besides these there were four other costume dances. Sometimes the people at large were the performers, appearing in their ordinary apparel and participating to the number of two or three hundred at a time. The Iroquois costume might be called an apparel for the dance. This was the occasion on which the warrior was desirous to appear in his best attire. The most gaudy costume was the kilt or Ga-ka-ah, which was secured around the waist by a belt and descended to the knee. In ancient times this was of deer skin. It was fringed and embroidered with porcupine quills. In modern times various fabrics have been substituted for deer skin.

Upon the headdress much attention was bestowed. The frame consisted of a band of splint adjusted around the head with a cross band arching over the top from side to side. A cap was made to enclose the frame. In later times a silver band was fastened around the splints; from the top a cluster of white feathers depended; besides this a single feather of the largest size was set in the corner of the headdress inclining backward. This feather, which was usually the plume of an eagle is the characteristic of the Iroquois. The leggin, which was feathered at the knee and descended upon the moccasin, was made originally of deer skin, and ornamented with quill work upon the bottom and side, the embroidered edge





being in front. In later times red broadcloth embroidered with beads has been substituted. In most cases much ingenuity and taste were displayed in the execution of the work upon this article of apparel. The warrior might well be proud of this part of his costume. The moccasin was also made of deer skin. In the modern moccasin the front part is worked with porcupine quills after the ancient fashion, and the part which falls down upon the sides is embroidered with beads. Not the least important article was the belt, which was prized as highly as any part of the costume. These belts were braided by hand, the beads being interwoven in the process of braiding. They were worn over the left shoulder and



around the waist. Arm bands, knee bands and wrist bands were also part of the costume. Sometimes they were made of deer skin or white dog skin, and in later times of red and blue velvet embroidered with beads. In addition to knee bands, knee rattlers of deers' hoofs were worn. Personal ornaments of various kinds, with the war club, tomahawk and scalping knife completed the attire. No change has been made in the various articles of apparel ; they are now precisely the same as those worn by the Iroquois at the time of their discovery, except in the material used. In preparing for the dance it was deemed strictly necessary to have the headdress, belt and kilt, each wearer adding such ornaments, rattlers, etc., as he wished.



While either one of the two dances, the religious or the patriotic, was sufficient to arouse their enthusiasm, the war dance was the favorite. It was the rallying dance for dangerous expeditions that might cost the warrior his life, the dance that was indulged in just before the departure of the band, or upon the return of a victorious party. It was also the dance when sachems were raised to their office or upon the adoption of captives, entertainment of guests or initiation of the young. It was of Sioux origin, reaching back to a remote antiquity. It was the only dance in which speeches or responses were appropriate, and in this particular it was novel and oftentimes furnished great amusement. The big

talks relieved the dancers and diverted the people. It was usually of two or three hours' duration and performed in the evening, and only indulged in on important occasions. Fifteen made a full company, but often thirty participated. Preparations were made after dusk. In the evening all gathered in the council house and arranged themselves in favorable position to observe the dancers. The selection of the performers and leaders was usually made by the keeper of the faith, who also selected the war songs. In a lodge near the council house the band arrayed themselves in costume and war paint. Occasionally the war-whoop would break the stillness of the night as an indication that their preparations were





progressing. A keeper of the faith meantime prepared the assembled audience for what was coming by explaining the nature and objects of the dance. Presently a nearer war-whoop ringing through the air announced that the band was approaching, preceded by their leader, and marching to the beat of the drum. They drew near to the council house; as they came the crowd made room for them; the leader entered, followed by the feathered band, and at once opened the dance. In an instant they grouped themselves within a circular area. Standing thick together the singers commenced the war song, the drums beat, and the dancers made the hard floor resound with the noise of their feet. After a minute the song

ceased and with it the dance ; the band walked around a common center to the beat of the drum at half time ; another song soon commenced, the dancers quickened their time. In the middle of the song there was a change in the music, also a slight cessation of the dance, after which it became more animated than before, until the song ended and the band again walked to the beat of the drum. Each time the war song lasted about two minutes, and the interval between them was about as long. These songs were usually recited by about four singers, the drums beat twice in each second, the voice of the singer keeping pace, making rapid and strongly accented music."

Charlevoix furnishes this translation

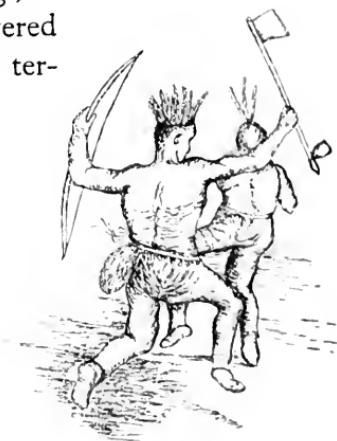


of one of the songs :

“ I am brave and intrepid.
I do not fear death or any kind of torture.
Those who fear them are cowards.
They are less than women.
Life is nothing to those who have courage.
May my enemies be confounded with despair
and rage.”

Doubtless nearly all of their war songs were of this same general character. It is difficult to describe the step except generally. It was chiefly on the heel, with rapid changes of position. The heel was raised with great quickness, to keep time with the beat of the drum, at the same time shaking the knee rattles. In the war dance the attitudes were those expressing violent passions, and were not graceful. At

the same instant in a group one might be seen in the attitude of attack, another of defense, one in the act of drawing a bow, another of striking with a war club, some in the act of throwing the tomahawk, some listening, others striking a foe. The violent motions of the body, while they increased the spirit of the dance, led to distortions of the countenance as well as uncouth attitudes. The striking costumes of the dancers, their erect forms at certain stages of the figures, the rattle of the dance together with the excited people made up a scene of no common interest. In this dance the warwhoop and the response always preceded each song; it was given by the leader and answered by the band. A description of this ter-





rific outbreak of the human voice is scarcely possible. It was a prolonged sound upon a high note, with a decadence near the end, followed by an abrupt and explosive conclusion, in which the voice was again raised to the same pitch. The whole band responded with a scream, upon the same key with which the leader concluded and at the same instant. Any one present was at liberty to make a speech at any stage of the dance. His desire was communicated by a rap. At this sound the dance ceased, or if finished and the band were walking, the drums ceased and all present were quiet. The only condition affixed to the right of making a speech was that of bestowing a present at its close to the dancers or to the

one addressed. After the speech was concluded and the present bestowed, the war-whoop and responses were again sounded, the drums beat, the song and dance commenced and were ended as before. Then followed another speech, and still another. In this manner the war dance was continued until the spirit of enjoyment began to subside, when the final war-whoop put an end to the dance and the band retired. The speeches were often pleasantries between individuals, or strictures upon each other's foibles or peculiarities, or perchance patriotic exhibitions of feeling, according to the fancy of the speaker.





VIII.

HEIR superstitious belief was a great obstacle to the enlightenment of the savage. The overthrow of the superstition of the dream was the first work of the Jesuit priest. From the date of their entrance among the Indians commences our actual knowledge of the conditions then existing ; their relation furnish a record of privation and suffering, for the cause in which they were engaged, that to-day, is the admiration of the student of history. The divinity followed by the Indian prior to the introduction of Christianity was the dream. Many stories told by the early missionaries illustrate the important part played by

it. They thought or talked of nothing else ; their wigwams and forests were full of dreams. They spared no pains or trouble to manifest their devotion to the spirit of the dream. If an Indian dreamed of captivity he called upon his friends to find him and make the situation as real as possible, after which he thinks that a real capture and torture has been thwarted, and the dream is given credit for having saved his life. They have been known to have traveled hundreds of miles to procure a certain dog that they had dreamed might be purchased. One can easily imagine the dangers early settlers and traders must have found themselves subjected to among a people who would murder and scalp in cold blood one



whom they might dream of as deserving such a fate. The squaws, by the peculiarities of their sex, were the most zealous devotees of the idol ; and while no sacrifice was offered to it they tried to bring to pass the condition of the dream, fully believing that whatever they failed to execute would come back to them in some misfortune. It was somewhat remarkable that most of the Indians took less pains to perform the requirements of the dream when in good health than when ailing ; then a sovereign cure was effected by the faithful performance of whatever they may have dreamed.

Medicine men were always called in, and invariably turned the interpretation of the dream to a source of profit, as

the poor Indian would spare nothing in doing what the medicine man deemed necessary for the propitiation of the Great Spirit. In every age and condition of society the best thought of the most gifted intellects have been expended upon religious subjects. These conclusions and reflections by an individual growth become a fixed belief, and in time a system of worship is founded. Belief and worship become incorporated into the civil and social institutions of man and soon form a part of the living and active mind. Without a knowledge, therefore, of the religious life of a people their political and domestic transactions would be wholly inexplicable. The purity of the elements of



the religious system of the Iroquois compensates for the blemishes of its spiritual edifice. The Greeks discovered traces of divinity in nature's works. In the belief of the Indians and that of the ancients there was a similarity of ideas that was noticeably shown in the legend and fable and still stronger in their notion of the spiritual world, rising in many respects above the highest conception of the ancient philosophy.

The name Great Spirit was applied by the entire red race to their deity, they not only believed that the Great Spirit existed, but their deductions were drawn from nature. Ancient mythology taught that the gods were born. The red men believed that the Great Spirit was born



and that He was active in the administration of the affairs of nature.

In their religious system they had little to do with the creation of the visible universe. Tradition told them that it grew miraculously, a self-prepared abode for the Great Spirit, before the advent of which they had no knowledge. They acknowledged the creation of the animal and vegetable world, and the adaptation of the elements and the whole universe to the use of man. That the Indian arrived at a fixed belief in the existence of one superior being has been a matter of surprise and admiration, says Morgan. In the existence of a Great Spirit, invisible, but ever present, the universal red race believed, and by the uni-



versality of this belief he was saved from the deepest of all barbarism and idol worship. They regarded the Great Spirit as the god of the Indian alone. They looked up to Him as the author of their being, to Him they gave thanks for the changes of seasons, corn, fruits, game and fish.

While their religious system taught the existence of the Great Spirit, Ha-ne-go-ate-geh was recognized as an evil spirit, and had a prior existence. The creation of man and all useful animals was credited to the Great Spirit. While to the Evil Spirit was given the creation of all monsters, reptiles and noxious plants. The Great Spirit delighted in virtue and in the happiness of his creatures. Ha-ne-go-ate-geh's

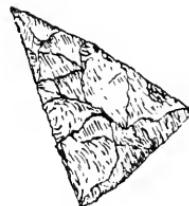
deeds were always evil, creating discord and multiplying calamities. The Indian's trust in the Great Spirit gave him strength to withstand the wiles of the evil one. Henu, to whom was committed the thunderbolt, at once the voice of admonition and the instrument of vengeance, was also intrusted with the formation of the clouds and the gift of rain. By Henu was the earth to be cooled and refreshed. He sustained harvests, ripened and matured the fruits. Evil doers and witches were made the subjects of his wrath, and often threatened with a visitation from Him, with power to inflict sudden and fearful punishment. He was regarded as the avenger of evil, was represented as being in the form of a man dressed in



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the costume of a warrior; upon his head was worn the magical feather, rendering him invulnerable to the attacks of the Evil Spirit. He always carried a basket of flints, fragments of flint rock, which he threw as he rode in the clouds. In the spring time their invocations were to Henu, that he would water, nourish and care for the crops. At harvest time they returned thanks to him for the gift of rain, and asked him to continue to them the watchful care of the thunderer. Henu was given the title of grandfather by the Iroquois, in order to bring him into closer relation with them in all his acts; they recognized the higher power of the Great Spirit.

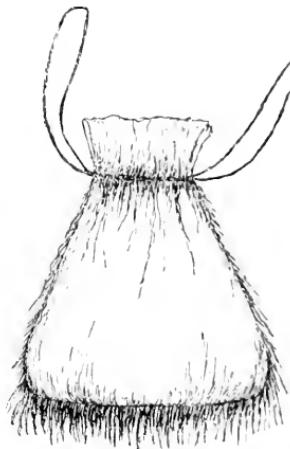
Another spiritual creation of the Iroquois is recognized in Ga-oh, the spirit



of the winds. He was also subordinate to the Great Spirit. He was represented in the form and face of an old man in solitary confinement, surrounded by a tangle of discordant winds and apparently impatient of restraint. His residence, the home of the winds, was in the western quarter of the heavens. His struggles to free himself caused the breeze, varying in force as his struggles increased. The spring wind moves the clouds and shakes the tree tops, but when Ga-oh reaches a state of frenzy he sends forth blasts that strike down the tall strong trees. The Indian surrounds himself with many of the inhabitants of the spiritual world, such as the spirit of medicine, fire water, and different species of trees, shrubs and plants.



Many objects of nature were placed under the watchful care of some protecting spirit, some being given bodily form and specific duties, but the most were feebly imagined existence. In their worship these subordinates were known as the invisible aids, and included the whole spiritual world, from Heme the thunderer down to the spirit of the Strawberry. The Iroquois appear to have had but a faint conception of the omnipresence of the Great Spirit or of any individual power sufficient to administer unassisted the works of creation and the affairs of men. They believed that the Great Spirit had surrounded himself with subordinate spiritual beings of his own creation, to whom were given the immediate supervision



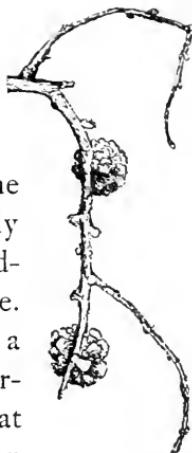
of the works of nature. He thus rendered himself in a limited sense omnipresent, ruling and regulating the works of creation with ease. These spirits were never objects of worship; the Iroquois regarded them merely as unseen assistants and executors of the will of the Great Spirit.

All the agencies of evil were the creations of Ha-ne-go-ate-geh; to counteract these the efforts of the Great Spirit and his spiritual host were necessarily put forth. The Iroquois believed that tobacco was given them as a means of communication with the spiritual world. By burning it they could send petitions with its incense up to the Great Spirit, and render acknowledgment for blessings; without this offer-



ing the ear of the Great Spirit could not be gained. In like manner they returned thanks to the invisible aids for their friendly offices and protecting care. It was customary with them to thus return thanks to the trees, shrubs, plants, rivers, fire, winds, in fact to every thing in nature that ministered to their wants and awakened feelings of gratitude. This was sometimes done without the intervention of tobacco; they addressing the object themselves. The use of tobacco was common to both sexes, while some writers call the Iroquois the tobacco people. But few tribes have been known that were **not** inveterate users of the weed.

A belief in witches remains with many of them to this day. It was formerly one



of the most deep-seated notions in the minds of the Iroquois. Formerly manly lives were sacrificed in accordance with a law that a witch must die. Morgan speaks of an instance where a squaw was shot on the Allegany reservation, in 1850, and further says that such instances have been common among the Senecas within the last fifty years. But we need to go back but a few years in our own history to find a parallel in the taking of life under the mistaken notion that the supernatural was vested in human beings. There was a current belief among the Iroquois that witches were banded together in a secret organization, having an initiation ceremony, the fee being the life of his nearest and dearest friend, taken with



poison on the night of his admission.

Their readiness to accept the superstitious beliefs may be ascribed to the legends and fables handed down to the young from year to year. These tales for extravagance of invention surpassed the fireside stories of all others.

The two following stories were given by Albert Cusick :

A man whose brother was very sick suspected the witches of causing his illness. He tried to find out who they were and where they met, so he went to an old woman, and told her he wanted to be a witch. She said: "If you are very much in earnest you may be, but when you begin you must go to your sister and point at her. Then she will be taken sick, and after a time

will die." So he went and told his sister and they arranged a plan. She was to pretend to be ill after he came home, and let this be known. When night came he started for the place of meeting with the old woman, but as he went he now and then broke off a leaf or a bit of underbrush. All at once the old woman sprang into a tree and clung to it; and as she turned around she was a great panther, with sharp teeth, glaring eyes and long claws. As she spit and snarled at him he was terribly frightened, but pretended not to be afraid. So she came down as an old woman again, and said? " Didn't I frighten you?" " Oh, no," he answered, " I was not a bit afraid ; I would like to be like that myself." So they went



on, and as they went he broke the bush here and there. After a time they came to an open place in the woods where were gathered many old men and women, and some young women, too. He was surprised at those he found there. There was a little kettle over a fire in the midst of the place. It was very small indeed, not larger than a tea-cup. Over it hung a bunch of snakes, from which blood dripped into the kettle, and of this all drank a little from time to time. He pretended to drink, and after that looked carefully about to see who were there. They did many things, and took many shapes, and frequently asked what he would like to be. He said "A screech owl." So they gave him an owl's head, which



was to put on later. They told him when he had this on he would be able to fly like a bird. He imitated the owl's cries and movements, and they said he would be a boss witch. When he put on the head he seemed to loose control of himself, and it took him over the trees to his brother's house. At the same time the meeting broke up and the witches went off in various shapes, as foxes, wolves, panthers, hawks and owls. When he came to his brother's all in the house were scared at the noise of an owl on the roof, for he made sounds just like one. Then he took off the head and went into the house. He pointed at a dog instead of his sister, and the dog sickened and died. His sister pretended to be sick,



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as they had agreed, and the witches came to see her. They mourned for her, just as though they had not intended her death, and talked about her illness everywhere. The next day the young man got the warriors together, and told what he had seen. They consulted and armed themselves, agreeing to follow him that night. The band went through the bushes and trees, finding the way by the leaves and twigs he had broken. They knew the spot, which was on their reservation, and when they reached it the witches' meeting had begun. They had officers and speakers, and one of them was making a fine speech. He said if they killed any person they would go to Heaven, and the Great Spirit would reward the

witches well. They might save their victims from much evil by killing them, for they might become bad or unfortunate. If they died now they would go to the Great Spirit. While he was speaking the young man gave a sign, and the warriors rushed in and killed all the witches.

The other story is as follows :

An old woman lived with her grandson, but went away from home every night. There was a loft in her house, where she went every evening, but she would not let the boy go. He asked many times where she went, but she would not tell. When he seemed asleep she was off at once, and if he woke up when she returned he heard a curious sound on the roof before she





came in. Once while she was away during the day he thought he would find out what he could ; so he climbed into the loft. There was a hole in the roof, and in one corner of the loft there was a round chest of bark. In the bottom of this he found an owl's head. " Ah, this is very fine," said he. So he put the owl's head on his head. At once he lost control of himself, and the head flew off with him. He did not know what would happen, but seemed and acted like an owl. Away he went through the air to a house, where a sick woman lay, and flew all around it. A very crazy acting owl was he, as any owl might have been in the sun. He tried to stop himself but could not. He caught hold of sunflowers, but they came



up by the roots. He caught hold of bushes, and they did the same. At last he flew into the house and fell among the ashes, where the frightened people caught him. They found nothing but a small boy and an owl's head. He told his story, and thus a witch was found out.

It was reserved for the Iroquois to rest themselves upon a durable foundation by the establishment of a league. This alliance between their nations they connected by the imperishable bands of tribal relationship that would in time have absorbed or exterminated the whole Indian family east of the Mississippi. "Their council fires, so far as they are emblematic of civil jurisdiction, may have long since been extinguished.

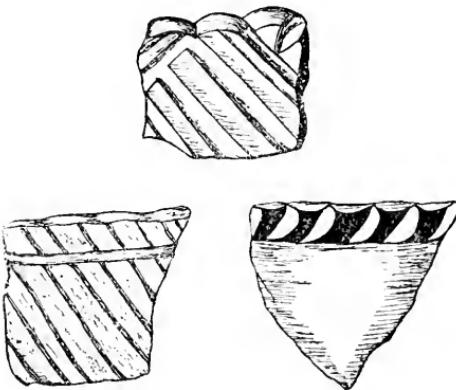


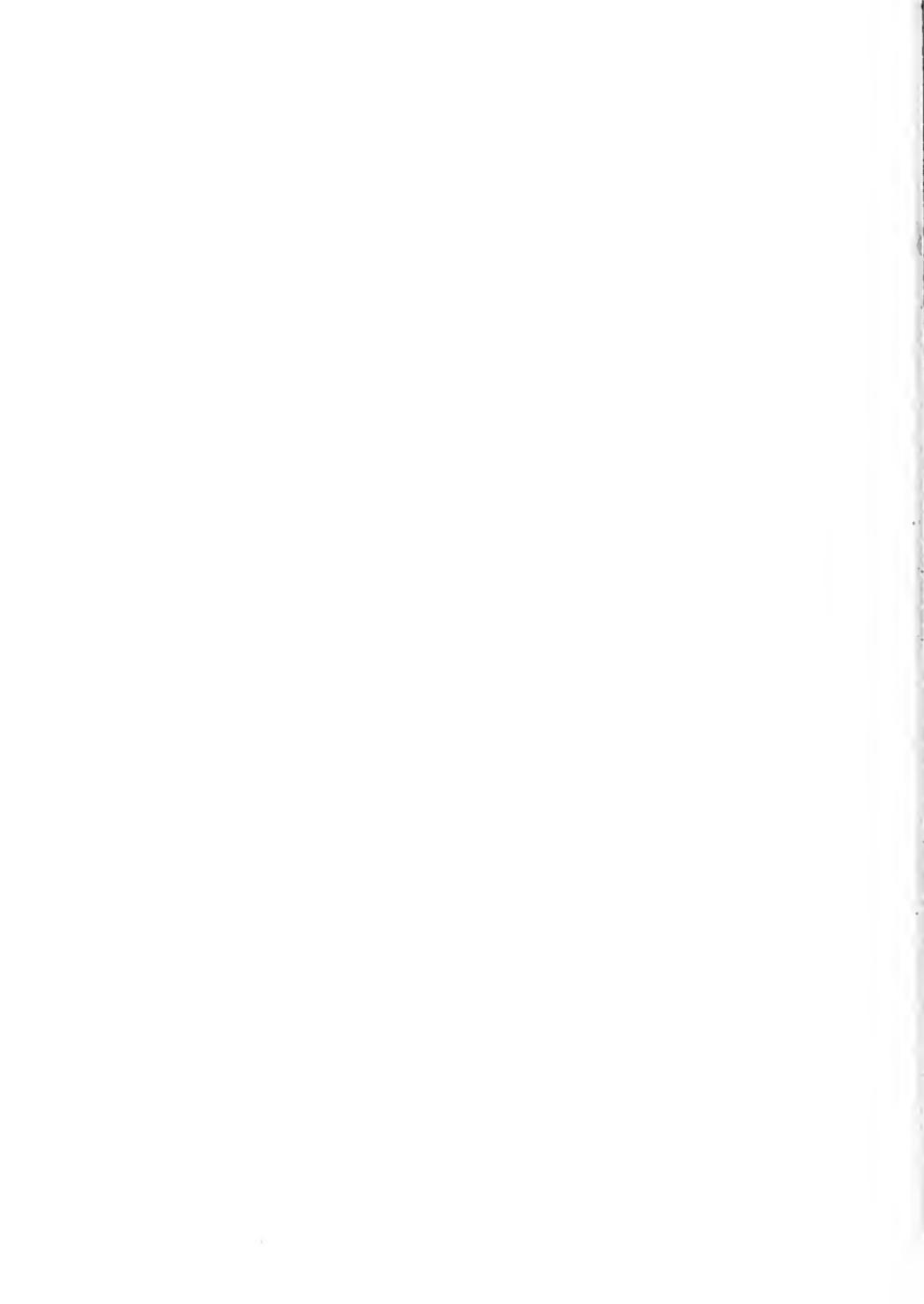
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Their empire has terminated, and the shades of evening are now gathering thickly over the scattered and feeble remnants of the once powerful league. Race has yielded to race, the inevitable result of the contact of the civilized with the hunter life. Who shall relate with what pangs of regret they yielded up from river to river, from lake to lake, this broad, fair domain of their fathers. The Iroquois will soon be lost as a people in that night of impenetrable darkness in which so many Indian races have been enshrouded. Already their country has been appropriated, their forests cleared and their trails obliterated. The residue of the powerful and gifted race who still linger around their native seats, are destined to

fade away until they become eradicated as an American stock.

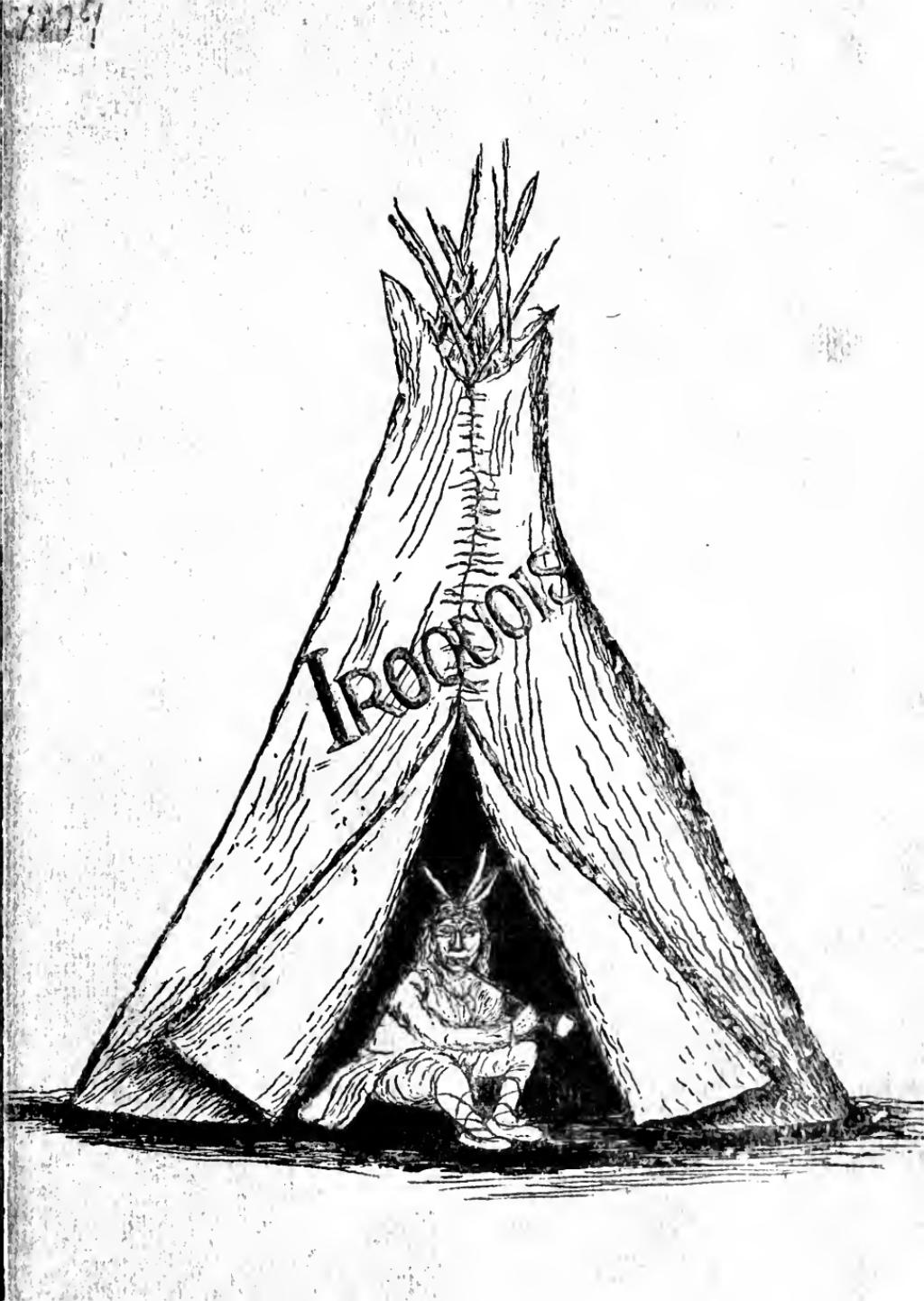
We shall ere long look backward to the Iroquois as a race blotted from existence; but to remember them as a people whose Sachems had no cities, whose religion had no temples, and whose government had no record."







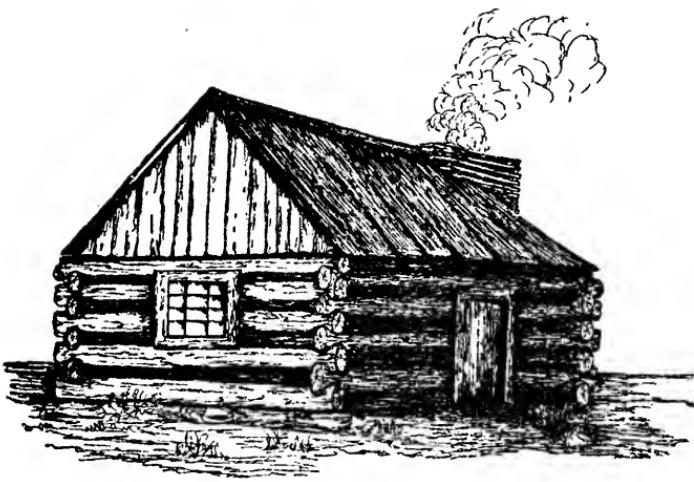




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